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Sakharov is dead

World leaders mourn human rights champion

MOSCOW, Dec 15, (Agencies): Sakharov, the brilliant physicist who built the Soviet hydrogen bomb, won the Nobel peace prize and became an unwavering beacon for the cause of human rights, has died at 68.

The man who went from exile to a seat in the new Soviet parliament died alone in his study last night of apparent heart attack, said his son-in-law, Yefrem Yankelevich. He had earlier in the day given an impassioned speech charging the Soviet hierarchy with leading the country to catastrophe.

President Mikhail Gorbachev, who freed Sakharov from nearly seven years of internal exile in Gorky but clashed with him repeatedly over the scale and speed of new Soviet political reforms, mourned the death as "a great loss."

"He was a man of conviction and sincerity," Gorbachev said. "He was not some sort of political intriguer. He was a person who had his own ideas, his own convictions which he expressed openly and directly. This doesn't mean I agreed with him, although on many things we did agree."

Sakharov risked his status as a national scientific hero and the honours the Soviet Union had heaped upon him to openly challenge the government when most others were silent. He was vilified, attacked by the authorities and banished from Moscow in 1980. The exile sapped his vitality and undermined his health.

After he was freed by Gorbachev in 1986, he won a seat in the Soviet Congress. He used it as a forum to press for reform and freedom in his country, gaining new stature as a conscience of the nation.

Tributes to the brave humanist came from around the world. Sakharov's death occurred after a long day of struggle to organise an opposition to the Communist Party. He died in his downstairs study as he was about to prepare a speech demanding that the communists' guaranteed hold on power be revoked, Yankelevich said.

Yelena Bonner, Sakharov's wife who accompanied him into exile and in his human rights crusades, went downstairs about two hours later and found him dead, the keys to the study still in his hand.

Sakharov's final words to his family were: "Tomorrow there will be battle," Yankelevich said. Just hours before he died, Sakharov stood on the floor of the Congress of People's Deputies and demanded that opposition delegates form an alternative party to the communists.

He told his fellow opposition congressmen that Gorbachev and the Communist Party leadership were "leading the country to catastrophe, prolonging the process of perestroika many years."

Vitaly Vorotnikov, a member of the presidium of the congress, opened today's session with news of the death. He paid tribute to Sakharov both as a scientist and a public figure.

"All that he did was dictated by his sleepless conscience, his deep humanitarian convictions," said Vorotnikov, a member of the ruling Communist Party Politburo and president of the Russian federation.

"With Sakharov, a part of our heart has departed from us," Dmitri Likhachev, another scholar-deputy, told the chamber.

The 2,250-seat congress formed a committee to organise Sakharov's funeral, and Gorbachev said he and the entire body would attend. At his own request, Sakharov will be buried alongside his parents Monday at Vostryakovskoe cemetery on the southwestern edge of Moscow, said a scientific secretary at the Lomonosov physics institute.

President George Bush, in a message of condolence, praised Sakharov's courage and devotion to freedom and said the Nobel peace prize winner was an example of goodness and decency.

British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher mourned the Soviet human rights champion as a remarkable and courageous man whose death left a great vacuum.

French President Francois Mitterrand paid homage to Sakharov, calling him a pioneer of human rights who combined scientific rigour with humanitarian values.

Nato foreign ministers meeting in Brussels, Belgium, hailed him as a pioneer who helped change Soviet society.

(See Page 12)

'Iraq building nuclear bomb'

US voices concern

WASHINGTON, Dec 15, (Reuters): The United States is concerned by reports that Iraq may be developing a nuclear weapon, but has no confirmation that China may be helping in the process, a State Department spokesman said yesterday.

"We view with concern any reports on the proliferation of sensitive nuclear technologies," spokesman Richard Boucher said at a briefing in response to questions about a British newsletter's account of Iraq's alleged nuclear weapons programme.

The British-based Mideast Markets Newsletter said Iraq is trying to build a nuclear bomb with Chinese help and has established a network of companies in Europe to procure equipment and expertise.

Boucher said he had seen the report about the Iraqi weapons programme, but added, "We do not have any information that China is helping Iraq to develop a nuclear weapon."

He noted that Iraq is a party to an international Non-proliferation Treaty which entails International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards on all nuclear material sent to Iraq.

The Newsletter said Iraq had made several attempts this year to buy technology to produce the enriched uranium suitable for an atomic bomb. It said China's most valuable contribution was magnets that are key parts of the centrifuges that produce enriched uranium.

China, it said, also supplies magnets for Pakistan's controversial centrifuge plant near Islamabad.

The first bomb would be tested within 10 years but would be too big to be mounted on long-range surface-to-surface missiles, the Newsletter said.



Relieved at last

Rubia (left) sobs as she meets her father after arriving in New Delhi from Srinagar. (Reuters wirephoto)

Israelis shoot at girls

OCCUPIED NABLUS, Dec 15, (Reuters): Palestinians backed to death a suspected informer yesterday and Israeli troops shot and wounded 15 Arabs, nine of them schoolgirls, during arrest in the occupied territories.

Residents of the West Bank town of Nablus said masked Palestinians axed to death an unnamed Arab suspected of aiding Israeli secret police. He was the 153rd Palestinian slain by other Arabs in the revolt, most as alleged collaborators.

Some residents said he wore a radio transmitter concealed in his wristwatch, carried a revolver and had photographs of Palestinian activists sought by Israel.

In the Gaza Strip, troops fired regular rounds and plastic-skin steel pellets at protesting students of a Rafah girls' school, wounding nine pupils, hospital staff said.

Troops shot and wounded six other Arabs during clashes in Rafah, Gaza City and the Bureij and Shati Palestinian refugee camps, they added.

Red Cross officials in Nablus said they had nothing to do with a cache of axes, masks and bannons Palestinian flags which troops found on Wednesday in the grounds of a house rented by the Red Cross in Nablus.

Red Cross official Martin Woker said the material had been hidden by unknown people. "We have no connection whatever with the things that were found there," he told Reuters.

In the Golan Heights, police fired teargas to disperse Arab Druze stone-throwers protesting on the anniversary of Israel's annexation of the region captured from Syria in the 1967 Middle East war. (See Page 13)

Troops called out in Kashmir

4 shot dead

SRINAGAR, Dec 15, (Agencies): Troops were called out to control violence in parts of India's Kashmir territory after police shot dead at least four people today.

An organisation representing five militants who were freed in exchange for the kidnapped daughter of interior minister, meanwhile, announced that they had taken up arms again.

The authorities extended a curfew to the state capital Srinagar, Shopian and Anantnag today in a bid to check the wave of violence set off by a separatist campaign.

Restrictions were placed on the northwestern towns of Baramulla and Sopore yesterday.

Two people died when police opened fire on an angry crowd in Anantnag and two more were shot by police in Shopian.

The crowds were protesting against the deaths of two people yesterday in an attack on a police station in Sopore.

Troops were called out in Srinagar to keep the peace during Friday prayers in the main mosque of India's only Muslim majority state, and in Anantnag.

S.S. Ali, deputy inspector general of police of Jammu-Kashmir state, said the army was placed on alert and a curfew imposed in Srinagar, home of 700,000 people, as a precautionary measure.

"We fear that the terrorists may try to create lots of disturbance, hence we have taken the steps," Ali said.

The Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) said five militants freed on Wednesday in exchange for the daughter of Indian Home Minister Mulvi Mohammad Sayeed had taken a fresh oath of loyalty. "They have taken up arms again," said a JKLF statement sent to reporters.

There was jubilation and dancing on the streets of Srinagar when the five were swapped for 23-year-old Rubia Sayeed, who had been held by the JKLF for five days.

The state's chief minister, Farooq Abdullah, flew to New Delhi for talks with Prime Minister Vishwanath Pratap Singh, who took office two weeks ago.

Singh, who has named Kashmir a top priority for his new government, told his first news conference today:

"We are not in favour of any precipitate action because it is a very delicate situation here."

He made no comment on the curfews, but in Srinagar senior state official Mohammad Shefi Pandit told reporters the curfews would be lifted only when authorities felt the situation had returned to normal.

"As a precaution, because there were apprehensions of trouble today, all security steps were taken," Pandit said.

The streets of Srinagar, summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir, were deserted except for armoured cars and troops armed with rifles and sub-machine guns.

Several machine-gun nests were set up on top of buildings in the old city.

Singh, said today there could be no hasty solutions to religious and ethnic polarizations in the country.

"A response to the problems cannot be mechanical and cannot be confined to the administrative machinery," he told reporters.

"It has to be addressed to the people and that is where the solution lies," he said. "But communal (religious) harmony will be the underlying matrix of our policies."

He also reiterated his government's determination to withdraw Indian peacekeeping troops from Sri Lanka but appeared to evade questions on whether the pullout would be completed by the end of the year, as earlier agreed.

Singh said the government would review the situation in the northern state of Jammu-Kashmir, where militant Muslims are finding increasing support for their campaign to secede from India.

Referring to the freeing of five Muslim separatists earlier this week to secure the release of Rubia, the 58-year-old prime minister said: "We are not bowing to terrorists. We saw the overall situation and took the decision."

On the economy, Singh said his government was starting with a shortage of resources. He said a detailed analysis of the economic situation would be completed later this month and that action would have to be taken to avoid getting into a debt trap.

Pakistan will send back Iran culprits

NICOSIA, Dec 15, (Reuters): Pakistan has agreed to arrest and extradite convicts and "counter-revolutionaries" who have fled there from neighbouring Iran, Iran's Irna news agency reported today.

It said the accord was reached at joint security talks in the southeastern Iranian city of Zاهدان.

Mutiny in Davao, troops rushed

MANILA, Dec 15, (AP): Hundreds of troops rushed to a major southern city today amid reports that rebel soldiers plan new attacks against President Corason Aquino. A general said the situation was "a little bit explosive."

Also today, the nation's leading cleric delivered an unusually strong attack on inefficiency and nepotism in the Aquino government, which is deeply shaken by a failed coup launched Dec. 1.

In Davao, 960 kilometres (560 miles) south of Manila, Brig. Gen. Mariano Baccay said 500 marines were flown to the city early today from Zamboanga to secure the airport, banks and other key installations following reports of rebel troop movements.

Baccay told reporters in unknown number of rebels had left their garrison, about 240 kilometres (150 miles) north of Davao. They were heading for Davao but their current location was unknown, he said. Roadblocks were set up near Davao, the largest city on Mindanao island.

"The situation is a little bit explosive," said Marine Brig. Gen. Braulo Balbas, deputy chief of the southern command. "But the armed forces of the Philippines is on top of the situation. We have our forces deployed in certain areas to meet any contingency that might arise."

Balbas said the mutineers are led by Col Alexander Noble, former deputy chief of Presidential Guards under the late president Ferdinand Marcos.

Noble was reported to have escaped after mutineers who seized a military air base in the central province of Cebu surrendered Dec. 9, ending the sixth coup attempt against Aquino after nine days.

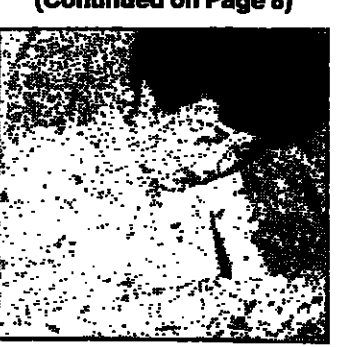
Officials said more than 1,500 rebellious soldiers remained at large, scattered across the archipelago despite the crushing of the mutiny that left 119 people dead and more than 600 wounded.

Defence Secretary Fidel Ramos played down threats of an uprising in Davao, saying, "that's being attended to even before the movement started ... really, small numbers are involved here."

Brig. Gen. Guillermo Flores, southern command chief, said in a telephone interview from his Zamboanga headquarters, the dispatch of the crack marine battalion was a "pre-emptive measure."

Mindanao Sen. Aquilino Pimentel yesterday warned of a possible coup attempt on the island in the next two weeks. Rodolfo Canieso, chief of the government intelligence service, told a senate committee that

(Continued on Page 8)



Aquino signs a bill designed to promote small-scale business in the countryside. (Reuters wirephoto)

Weather

TEMPERATURE will be below normal with light to moderate to fresh southeasterly wind.
State of sea: Slight to moderate.
High water: 12.00 pm
Low water: 7.00 am, 7.30 pm
Sunrise: 6.36 am
Sunset: 4.51 pm
Maximum temperatures recorded:
Kuwait: 18°C 64°F
Amman: 17°C 63°F
Falkland: 17°C 63°F
Minimum temperatures recorded:
Kuwait: 10°C 50°F
Amman: 9°C 48°F
Falkland: 16°C 61°F
Maximum humidity recorded:
Kuwait: 85 per cent
Amman: 89 per cent
Falkland: 92 per cent

BANGLADESH

A four-page (17-20) supplement with today's issue, on the Victory Day of Bangladesh.

NEWSWATCH

Extradition of 7

CAIRO, Dec 15, (Kuna): Egypt will seek extradition of seven Egyptian nationals working in Kuwait for involvement in smuggling foreign currencies into the country, reliable security sources told Kuna yesterday.

The sources said investigation by Egyptian authorities disclosed that the seven were involved in a gang for illegal dealing in hard currencies and that they had collected an equivalent of \$34 million from fellow citizens in Kuwait this month and sent the sum to Egypt.

Religious approval

CAIRO, Dec 15, (Reuters): One of the Arab world's top composers/singers, won religious approval yesterday for a record called blasphemous by some Muslims because it questions the threatening of God.

386 prisoners freed

DHAKA, Dec 15, (AP): The government has freed 386 prisoners to mark independence day, an Interior Ministry statement said today.

Among the prisoners released were 227 people held under a special act that empowers the government to arrest and jail anyone without showing cause.

US warning

WASHINGTON, Dec 15, (Reuters): The United States said today it was concerned that terrorists may be planning attacks against targets in Western Europe and West Africa, possibly including Americans.

No prosecution

EDINBURGH, Dec 15, (Reuters): Scotland's top law officer said the investigation into the bombing of a Pan Am jumbo jet over Lockerbie which killed 270 people a year ago had made progress but no prosecution was yet in sight.

"While encouraging progress continues to be made towards our goal of criminal prosecution, we have not yet reached the stage where proceedings are immediately in prospect," Lord Fraser, the Scottish lord advocate, told journalists.

No French ships

PARIS, Dec 15, (UPI): France said yesterday that Libya has closed its ports to French ships in the latest twist of a rancorous dispute in which Libyan leader Col Muammar Khaddafi accuses Paris of waging "a campaign of oppression" against Muslims.

The Quai d'Orsay expressed its "surprise and reproach" at the boycott by Tripoli and called for it to be raised immediately.

Mass grave

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM, Dec 15, (AP): Officials today announced the discovery of a mass grave containing the remains of 135 children of North African Jewish immigrants who died after a 1957 epidemic, Israel television reported.

The report ended a day of prayers and accusations by Yemenge Jews who feared the graves contain the bones of as estimated 600 children from there in the 1950's, shortly after their arrival in Israel.

Noriega named

Chief of government
PANAMA CITY, Dec 15, (AP): An assembly controlled by Gen Manuel Antonio Noriega named him chief of government today.

The unanimous resolution by the 510-member people's assembly, said Noriega was being designated "maximum leader for national liberation."



Sakharov at his last meeting at the Soviet Academy of Sciences in Moscow on Dec 7. (Reuters wirephoto)

Palestinians raid Syrian base, 14 die

Threat to kill Pope

BEIRUT, Dec 15, (Reuters): Palestinian commandos loyal to PLO leader Yasser Arafat raided a Syrian army base in South Lebanon in a new challenge to Damascus's military presence in the country.

Five Syrian soldiers were killed in the raid waged at dawn yesterday by members of Arafat's Fatah mainstream and Lebanese Muslim fundamentalist militiamen of the Sunni Muslim Tawheed movement, security sources said.

They said the attackers, who came from a Palestinian refugee camp in the southern port of Sidon, wanted to free a Fatah officer who had been captured by Syrian troops after a gunfight.

Hospital sources said nine of the attackers, who fought three hours of close-quarter battles with Syrian troops, were killed. Around 30 people were wounded, including six Syrian soldiers and 18 of the assailants, they added.

The 100-strong Palestinian and Tawheed force, armed with rocket-propelled grenades and machine guns, fought their way into the three-storey Syrian headquarters at Rmalieh, 32 km (20 miles) south of Beirut.

The building was blasted and raked with fire during the exchanges. An unknown number of prisoners were set free, the sources said.

Fatah sources said the captive Palestinian officer was rescued. Pro-Syrian forces say he was moved to another area.

An estimated 1,200 Syrian soldiers were sent from Beirut to reinforce Rmalieh yesterday. They drove to the base in armoured troop carriers and aboard jeeps.

The commandos clashed with gunmen of the Lebanese Communist Party and the Sunni Muslim Popular Liberation Army (PLA) on their way back to the nearby Palestinian camp of Miyeh Miyeh.

Three PLA militiamen, two communists and a Tawheed attacker were among the dead.

A Muslim extremist group threatened in a statement sent to an international news agency in West Beirut yesterday to kill Pope John Paul because it said he supported Aoun.

Bomber gets life sentence

PARIS, Dec 15, (Reuters): A French anti-terrorist court sentenced a 27-year-old Tunisian to life imprisonment today for the 1985 bombing of a Paris department store in which a security guard died and 18 people were injured.

Court president Jeanne Collobert, announcing the sentence, said Habib Masmar should serve a minimum of 18 years in jail for the attack on the Paris branch of the British Marks and Spencer chain, founded by a Jewish family.

Masmar's former mistress and sister-in-law, Souad Alassoni, who betrayed him to the police after he ran off with another woman, was acquitted.

The prosecution had demanded a life term for Masmar, who was described in court as "a mercenary of terror."

Three killed in Hyderabad after lifting of curfew

HYDERABAD, Dec 15, (AP): Police said gunmen killed three people and wounded nine others today when authorities lifted a curfew imposed to halt three days of ethnic violence.

The shootings raise this week's toll to 11 killed in southern Hyderabad city, at the heart of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's home province of Sind.

Police imposed a shoot-on-sight curfew today. The army was deployed earlier this week, and since then heavily armed military personnel have patrolled the city.

A police spokesman said the curfew was lifted for three hours so people could go to the mosques Friday, Islam's day of worship.

Shopkeepers also were allowed to do business so people could replenish dwindling food supplies. The curfew had been in effect for more than 24 hours before today's brief break.

The spokesman said three civilians were shot and killed and nine were wounded by unidentified assailants.

Docs overlook half of depressed patients: problem missed

SANTA MONICA, California, Dec 15, (AP): Doctors fail to recognize severe depression in half the patients who suffer it, and the problem is even worse in prepaid health plans where doctors may be under more pressure to keep costs down, researchers said.

"Depression is quite serious," said Dr. Kenneth Wells, chief author of the study. "It's eminently treatable." And yet, he said, general practitioners, internists and other professionals not specializing

in mental health often miss the problem.

The findings suggest doctors should get better mental health training, and be given better techniques, such as patient questionnaires, to detect depression, said Wells, a psychiatrist at the University of California, Los Angeles, and senior researcher at the Rand Corp. think tank in Santa Monica.

The study, published in Friday's Journal of the American Medical Association, involved 650 severely depressed patients and more than 500

doctors in Los Angeles, Chicago and Boston.

The researchers found general medical doctors paid on a fee-for-service basis detected just 54 per cent of depressed patients, while prepaid doctors recognised only 42 per cent of such people. The latter category includes doctors working for health maintenance organisations, or HMOs, and physicians who provide prepaid care in solo and group practices.

Psychiatrists and psychologists did far better

than general doctors, and there was no significant difference between those paid by the visit and those paid in advance, the study found. Mental health specialists working in prepaid programmes recognised depression 83 per cent of the time, and others spotted it 86 per cent of the time.

"I know depression is missed," said Dr. Charles McElroy, president of the Los Angeles County Medical Association. "All doctors have to be on the lookout for the depressed patient. This study will

help raise everybody's level of awareness."

Stuart Byer, president of the California Association of HMOs, said he couldn't explain why prepaid doctors were less likely than others to recognise depression. But he said other studies show doctors in HMOs — which were established to control spiralling medical costs — "deliver better care by not overprescribing drugs, procedures and hospitalisation."

While everyone feels sad at times, 9.4 million

people in the United States suffer clinical depression during any six-month period, according to the American Psychiatric Association, which calls depression "the most common and treatable of all mental illnesses."

"One in four women and one in 10 men can expect to develop it during their lifetime. Between 80 per cent and 90 per cent of those who suffer depression can be effectively treated" by medication or psychotherapy, an APA pamphlet said.

Aspirin-birth defect link disputed

BOSTON, Dec 15, (UPI): Taking aspirin early in pregnancy does not appear to increase the chances that a woman will give birth to a baby with a defective heart, researchers reported in a finding contrary to previous studies.

In the largest study of its kind, Boston University researchers failed to find any significant association between aspirin use and

five types of potentially fatal heart birth defects.

"The take-home message is that, based on the largest study to date, aspirin does not appear to increase the risk of these five cardiac defects," said Martha Werler, an epidemiologist at Boston University School of Public Health who led the study.

The findings contradict at least two previous studies that found women who took aspirin in the first trimester of their pregnancy were up to three times more likely to have babies with defective hearts. Those studies, however, were based on smaller numbers of women and less reliable methods, the researchers said.

Define moment of death — Pope

VATICAN CITY, Dec 15, (AP): Citing ethical problems involved with organ transplants, Pope John Paul II yesterday called for stepped-up scientific research to determine the exact moment of death.

Addressing scientists in Vatican City to study the problem, John Paul spoke of the "tragic dilemma" of a sick person urgently needing a transplant from someone whose death remains in doubt.

"The respect due to human life absolutely prohibits the direct and positive sacrifice of that life, even though it may be for the benefit of another human being who might be felt to be entitled to preference," the Pope said.

Once a determination has been arrived at, the Pope said, "then the apparent conflict, between the duty to respect the life of one person and the duty to effect a cure or even save the life of another disappears."

"One would be able to know at what moment it would be perfectly permissible to do what had been definitely forbidden previously, namely, the removal of an organ for transplanting, with the best chances of a successful outcome."

The meeting was organised by the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, an advisory body to the papacy, which first took up the issue of defining the moment of death in 1985.

The Vatican yesterday cautioned Roman Catholics that Eastern meditation practices such as zen and yoga can "degenerate into a cult of the body" that debases Christian prayer.

"The love of God, the sole object of Christian contemplation, is a reality which cannot be 'mastered' by any method or technique," said a document issued by the congregation for the doctrine of the faith.

The document, approved by Pope John Paul II and addressed to bishops, said attempts to combine Christian meditation with Eastern techniques were fraught with danger although they can have positive uses.

It said the practices "can degenerate into a cult of the body and can lead surreptitiously to considering all bodily sensations as spiritual experiences."

The 23-page document, signed by the West German congregation Head Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, was believed the first time the Vatican sought to respond to the pull of Eastern religious practices.

Ratzinger said at a news conference that the document was not condemning Eastern meditation practices but was elaborating guidelines for proper Christian prayer.

Postures

By Eastern methods, a footnote said, the document was referring to practices inspired by Hinduism and Buddhism such as zen, transcendental meditation and yoga, which involves prescribed postures and controlled breathing.

"Some people today turn to these methods for therapeutic reasons. The spiritual restlessness arising from a life subjected to the driving pace of a technologically advanced society also brings a certain number of Christians to seek in these methods of prayer a path to interior peace and psychic balance," the document said.

"Other Christians, caught up in the movement towards openness and exchanges between various religions and cultures, are of the opinion that their prayer has much to gain from these methods."

"Observing that in recent times many traditional methods of meditation, especially Christian ones, have fallen into disuse, they wonder whether it might not now be possible, by a new training in prayer, to enrich our heritage by incorporating what has until now been foreign to it."

Personal

The document defined Christian prayer as a "personal, intimate and profound dialogue between man and God."

Such prayer "flows from impersonal techniques or from concentrating on oneself, which can create a kind of rut, imprisoning the person praying in a spiritual privation."

The document expressed particular concern over misconceptions about body postures in meditation.



Santa takes a peek

A Santa Claus take a peek at a two-month-old baby girl who is suffering congenital dislocated hips as he presents Christmas gift to patients at the

Duchess of Kent Children's Hospital in Hong Kong Dec 14. (Reuters wirephoto)

High blood pressure

Calcium diet cure

EDMONTON, Alberta, Dec 15, (Reuters): A high-calcium diet will improve the condition of millions who suffer from high blood pressure, a team of Canadian researchers said.

Scientist Christina Benishin, a member of the University of Alberta team, said that as many as 40 per cent of all cases of hypertension are caused by an overactive parathyroid gland.

Benishin said the tiny gland, near the thyroid, often produces unusually high amounts of calcium in cells lining the blood vessels, causing them to constrict.

Tests show that increasing calcium in the diet actually suppresses the gland's activity and lowers the blood pressure, she said.

"This may lead to a cure, that's what we are hoping. It's a long hard road, this is a step in the right direction," she told Reuters.

But the biochemist noted that a calcium-rich diet only appears to work on those who have an overactive gland. In other cases of high blood pressure, it may make the condition worse.

Known as the silent killer, high blood pressure affects one in four North Americans and contributes to three-quarters of all heart attacks and strokes.

Benishin said the calcium discovery was made after about 18 months of university research, using laboratory animals, and after discussion with scientists in Cornell University in New York and the University of Tokyo.

"This is one situation where we can say, 'yes, our findings can really help people,'" she said.

MEDICAL FILE

Smoking habits linked: The less education people have, the more likely they are to smoke cigarettes, the US centres for Disease Control has reported on Thursday.

A CDC study, conducted in 36 states and the district of Columbia in 1988, showed about 45 per cent of people age 18 to 34 with less than a high school education smoked regularly. About 35 per cent of those with a high school education smoked, while only 20 per cent with some college smoked.

The same pattern held true for older adults, although the differences between the groups decreased as the population got older, CDC officials said.

CDC spokeswoman Margaret Pickrel said the new findings have prompted the agency to seek new ways of reaching the less educated, who also usually have lower incomes. (UPI)

Premies still dying: Despite the latest advances and more aggressive efforts, doctors have been largely unable to increase the survival rate for the most premature babies, researchers reported. Researchers at case Western Reserve University's medical school in Cleveland found the chances of survival remained low for premature babies born less than 25 weeks into their development.

"I think we've reached the limits," said Dr. Maureen Hack, an associate professor of pediatrics who led a new study published in the New England Journal of Medicine.

The question of when a baby is viable outside the womb has been an issue in the nation's abortion debate, the researchers noted.

"With pregnancy being terminated in some parts of the United States late in the second trimester and with live-born infants delivered at 22 weeks of gestational age occasionally surviving, it is imperative to determine the probability of survival for extremely low-birth-weight infants," they said. (UPI)

Woman makes history: A Canadian woman has made medical history this week by successfully using an American company who manufactured her defective mechanical heart valve.

Connie Cooper, from Mississauga, just outside of Canada's largest city, Toronto, launched a lawsuit against Shiley Incorporated (a subsidiary of Pfizer Inc. of Irvine, California) for mental distress caused by the heart valve. It is the first time anyone wins a settlement from the company without a valve having broken inside her body. Cooper says she lives with the fear each day that the valve might break and kill her or cause severe damage to her body.

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Lookalikes
Emily Schapman of Birmingham, Ala. and Robert Nail of Hudson, Ohio pose as Scarlett O'Hara and Rhett Butler from the movie 'Gone With the Wind' after they won a lookalike contest on Dec. 12. The movie celebrates its 50th anniversary this week. (Reuters wirephoto)

PEOPLE AND PLACES

GULF BREEZE, Florida:
Diminutive Jim Mazzoze giggles and plays with toys like any other kindergarten student, but unlike her peers, the dark-haired tot can break inch-thick (25 mm-thick) boards with her hands and feet.
"Jim is basically a happy-go-lucky 5-year-old, but she's much more too," said Dan Mazzoze of Gulf breeze about his daughter, who recently earned her first-degree black belt in Tae Kwon Do, a Korean self-defence technique.
Jim became interested in martial arts two years ago when she watched her older brother practicing his moves. He also has a first-degree black belt, as does his mother. (UPI)

SEARCY, Arkansas: A man has been sentenced to two years in jail for slapping his 4-year-old son when he caught the boy sniffing gasoline, a prosecutor said Wednesday.
Richard Lewis Vandam, 42, of Georgetown, Arkansas, pleaded guilty to battery and was sentenced last week by Judge Cecil Tedder. (AP)

NEW YORK: Sting has been stung. "3 Penny Opera," a revival of the Bertolt Brecht-Kurt Weill musical starring the British rock star as Mack the Knife, will close December 31 after only a two-month run, a spokesman for the musical says.
It will have played 65 regular performances and 20 previews, said spokesman Pete Sanders.
The musical, which received largely negative reviews, has played to steadily dwindling audiences since it opened November 5 at the Lunt-Fontanne Theatre. (AP)

MOOREHEAD, Minnesota:
Mistletoe has been banned from Moorhead State University after a psychology instructor filed a grievance saying she believed it encourages sexual harassment.
University president Roland Dille agreed after instructor Margaret Potter, and the affirmative action officer then ordered the ban Monday.
"I'm not against Christmas, honestly," said Dille. "But we've come a long way in eliminating some of the customs that encouraged a very different treatment of women. In my opinion, Mistletoe tends to sanctify uninvited endearment." (AP)

MORGES, Switzerland: Thierry Roussel, former French husband of the late Christina Onassis, will live with their billionaire daughter Athina in a property above Lake Geneva, local officials said Thursday.
Christina Onassis married Roussel — her fourth husband — in 1984 and they bought a large house in the village of Gingins, near Geneva and above the lake.
Daughter Athina was born before the couple divorced in 1985 after less than two years of marriage and Roussel, himself from a wealthy family in pharmaceuticals, left Switzerland.
Christina Onassis died in Buenos Aires in 1988 and Athina, now four years old, inherited a fortune estimated at \$1 billion at least. The girl was placed in Roussel's charge. (UPI)

SANTA YNEZ, California: A fire that broke out at pop star Michael Jackson's ranch destroyed a barn and killed several fish but three giraffes housed in the barn and several chimpanzees and a small herd of llamas kept near the building managed to escape the flames, fire officials said Wednesday.
The fire, which apparently started accidentally, was discovered Tuesday evening by security guards at the ranch, about 150 miles (240 km) northwest of Los Angeles, and was reported to the Santa Barbara county fire department about 6.40 pm.
Jackson was not at the ranch at the time, and he was not available for comment.
Sheriff's deputy Don Fritelli said the first firefighters to arrive at the scene found the giraffe barn engulfed in flames. (UPI)

LAUSANNE, Switzerland: Swiss watchmakers, who make timepieces out of everything from gold to plastic, now want you to wear a cuckoo on your wrist.
The Swiss Cuckoo Watch, complete with alpine chalet, pine cones and mountain flowers, is about to make its debut on the market, the newspaper 24 Heures reported.
Unlike the traditional cuckoo clock, the bird will not pop out and sing the hours but will instead move each second. It is expected to cost less than 100 Swiss francs (\$65). (Reuters)

**Best lips
Barbara
tops list**

OAK BROOK, Illinois, Dec 15, (UPI): Barbara Bush, Bo Jackson and Michelle Pfeiffer had their lips in same place yesterday on a list of the world's "most beautiful lips" for 1989.
First Lady Barbara Bush topped the list with the "best-read lips" for becoming a major champion for literacy, said the lip experts at Blistex Inc., who compiled the 10th annual list.
Baseball-football star Bo Jackson, of Los Angeles Raiders and Kansas City Royals fame, wears Blistex. "Double-duty lips" and movie star Michelle Pfeiffer pucker up in the "The Fabulous Baker Boys," with "fabulips," according to the makers of the lip balm.
The title of "sickest lips" went to Lawrence Rawl, chairman of Exxon Corp. during the company's massive oil spill in Valdez, Alaska.
Entertainers Arsenio Hall ("most hip lips"), Roseanne Barr ("most no-holds-barred lips") and Oprah Winfrey ("first-est lips") also made the top 12.
Rock star Pete Townsend ("whose lips"), TV newscaster Deborah Norville ("today's lips") and hockey's record point scorer Wayne Gretzky ("coldest lips") were among the top 10.

WOODBURN, Oregon: Workers digging a sewer line found bones of animals dating back from the ice age.
William Orr, a geology professor at the University of Oregon and curator of its Thomas Condon collection of fossils, brought six bones from the site to the Woodburn city council meeting early this week.
"I'm here to generate enthusiasm for a summer dig," he said. "My grad students say I rarely get excited about anything, but I'm excited about this."
Orr said the bones were the best representation of ice-age mammals he had seen in a quarter-century of teaching. The bones were found 6 to 9 feet (1.8 to 2.7 m) below ground and are 20,000 to 50,000 years old, Orr said. (AP)

ROME: The Mayor of Pisa agreed Thursday to sign an order to close that city's famous leaning tower to the public at an as yet undisclosed date, the Italian news agency Ansa said.
Pisa Mayor Giacomo Granchi, who met with Minister for Public Works Giovanni Prandini in Rome, agreed to sign the closure order on Friday.
The agency said Granchi agreed to sign the order after he was assured the restoration work would begin as soon as possible, perhaps within the next three months.
Granchi, who had opposed closing the tower, said Monday that he now agreed it was necessary. However, he said the shutdown would not begin until after the Christmas holidays. (AP)

LONDON: British motorists with a taste for the expensive personal touch spent 1.5 million pounds sterling (\$2.4 million) on Thursday when a collection of exclusive car number plates came up for auction.
A mystery buyer paid a record 160,000 pounds (\$256,000) for plate number 1A, while doing another Shell Bell spent 43,000 pounds (\$69,000) on Jul 1E to put on her daughter Julie's BMW convertible.
"I know it's crazy money but I thought it would be a lovely Christmas present," she said.
Other special plates sold included FI RST, which fetched 33,000 pounds (\$53,000), MUS 1C, BI LLY and LUV IT.
The transport department sold 74 plates, raising twice the amount forecast by auctioneers Christie's. (Reuters)

LOS ANGELES: Maria Sharova, wife of actor and bodybuilder Arnold Schwarzenegger gave birth on Wednesday to their first child, a daughter, a spokeswoman for the actor said.
"The mother and child are in terrific health," the spokeswoman added.
Schwarzenegger, 42, whose films include Conan the Barbarian, and The Terminator, married Sharova, a television reporter and a niece of Senator Edward Kennedy, two years ago after an eight-year courtship. (Reuters)

Don Johnson captures burglar

LOS ANGELES, Dec 15, (AP): Actor Don Johnson testified that he confronted a burglar suspect inside his hotel room, then called upon his "Miami vice" cop show experience and ordered the intruder to the floor.
"I'm a fan," defendant Henry Rosenbaum cried, according to Johnson's testimony yesterday in a preliminary court hearing.
Johnson is the star of Miami vice, a popular American television show in which he plays a suave but street-smart Miami police officer with a two-

day stubble on his face, pastel-colored casual clothes and fast automobiles.
Johnson told municipal court judge Richard G. Berry that he and his then-fiancee Melanie Griffith and son Jesse were returning to their hotel Bel-Air room Jan 29 when Rosenbaum was discovered in the suite's bedroom.
"He was bent over my wife's overnight bag. He was going through my wife's things," Johnson said.
The actor left Miss Griffith and his son in the living room and confronted Rosenbaum in the

bedroom, ordering him to lie down on the floor and put his hands behind his head, Johnson testified.
The actor searched Rosenbaum, 35, for a weapon and found "a metal device of some sort." It was later identified as a diamond tester.
"I ordered him not to speak," Johnson said when asked about any discussion prior to the arrival of hotel security.
Miss Griffith didn't attend the hearing, which will decide whether Rosenbaum must stand trial on a felony burglary charge.

**Soviet seeks freedom
Star defects to US**

ST PAUL, Minnesota, Dec 15, (Reuters): A 24-year-old Soviet actress who defected to the United States said she hopes the freedom of her adopted country will enable her to realise her dream of becoming an actress in America.
"It's very beautiful in the Soviet Union, but I must stay here. I must have this opportunity to live my dream," Larisa Firsova, of the Central Children's Theatre of Moscow, told a news conference.
Speaking in broken English, and at times, through an interpreter, Firsova described having thought for many years about leaving her homeland.
"It kind of happened unexpectedly," Firsova said of her Monday defection.
She and several dozen Soviet actors performed this week as part of an exchange with the Children's Theatre Company of Minneapolis. Firsova left the group shortly before it was to return to the Soviet Union.
She declined to provide specific details of the "dream" which led her to seek political asylum in the United States, except to say it includes a desire to work here as an actress. She said discussing one's dream is considered bad luck in the Soviet Union.
A Minnesota family is hosting Firsova, who hopes to remain in the United States and look for work. She said she is impressed with the friendliness of Americans.



Firsova talks at a news conference. (Reuters wirephoto)

Comaneci shopping

POMPANO BEACH, Florida, Dec 15, (AP): Romanian gymnast Nadia Comaneci plopped down nearly \$20,000 in traveller's cheques on a Camaro convertible and shopped her way through clothing stores this week, sales clerks said.
Escorted by Constantin Panait, the married roofer who has accompanied the Olympic gold-medallist since she fled Romania, Ms Comaneci was staying in a \$130-a-night suite at a resort hotel through Wednesday.
Thomas Martin, a salesman at Maroon Chevrolet, said he sold Ms Comaneci the Camaro, a black convertible automatic with grey bucket seats.
"She fell in love with it," he said.
"In her country, all they have is stick shifts."
Dealership manager Ken Pataki said Ms Comaneci whipped out a wad of traveller's cheques to close the deal.

**Actress in coma
Near clinical death**

MADRID, Dec 15, (AP): Italian actress Silvana Mangano was in a deep coma and near death after surgery for a tumour in a Madrid hospital, a doctor said yesterday.
The 59-year-old actress who gained world-wide fame for her 1940s and 1950s neo-realist Italian films, entered the hospital Monday, when she underwent surgery for a growth between her two lungs, said Dr Antonio Aguado of Luz Hospital.
He told reporters "there is no hope that her condition will improve," saying she was "near clinical death."
The doctor, who did not say how long she had been in coma, said the growth had left Mangano unable to digest food, a condition that forced doctors to perform surgery.
Neither doctors nor family

members said whether the growth was cancerous, what caused her to slip into a coma or why she had surgery in Madrid.
Mangano first gained fame in her role as a sensual, provocative country girl in the 1949 Italian film "Riso Amaro (Bitter Rice)".
Italian film director Giuseppe de Santis cast her in the part after she had won the Miss Rome beauty contest and began playing supporting roles in post World War II films.
The next year she married the film's producer, Dino de Laurentis. They separated in 1983.
Spanish national radio reported that the couple's three daughters were in Madrid.
In her most recent work she played alongside Italian actor Marcello Mastroianni in the film "Dark Eyes."

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INTERNATIONAL

Casolo in US, denies charges

THOMASTON, Connecticut, Dec 15, (AP): Jennifer Casolo received a hero's welcome and proclaimed she was innocent of hiding munitions in her yard in El Salvador as she greeted 350 residents who turned out in freezing cold to cheer her return.

Casolo, who said she maintained neutrality while giving visiting Americans tours of El Salvador during four years there, said last night she will speak out against US aid to the Salvadoran government now that she has been expelled.

Casolo arrived in Miami on Wednesday, then flew yesterday to New York, where she fielded questions from reporters at LaGuardia airport before being driven the 75 miles (120 kilometres) to Thomaston in a Cadillac with Sen Christopher Dodd, who had lobbied for her release from a Salvadoran prison.

Casolo embraced her father, John Casolo, and met close friends and relatives, including her brother, John, who were waiting for her in the town hall of the town of 7,000 people.

Jennifer Casolo, standing on a flatbed truck draped in red, white and blue bunting, wished the crowd "Feliz Navidad," Spanish for Merry Christmas.

She left El Salvador on Wednesday after a judge dropped terrorism charges against her for lack of evidence and ordered her deported.

Casolo, who worked in El Salvador for the Christian Educational Seminars since 1985, was arrested on Nov 26 after authorities raided her house and found dynamite, grenades and more than 20,000 rounds of ammunition buried in the garden.

She said her tribulations were minor compared to those of the Salvadoran people, 70,000 of whom have died in a 10-year-old civil war. But the disrespect with which US authorities dealt with her case demonstrated their cynicism toward El Salvador's people, she said.

Salvadoran President Alfredo Cristiani said he was convinced of her guilt, despite her release. Asked about that last night, Casolo said simply, "I'm innocent."

Police yesterday raided the home of Salvador Ibarra, the lawyer who defended Casolo, arresting the lawyer's sister and two other people.

The United States criticised Salvadoran rebels for rejecting a peace proposal by Central American presidents, calling the decision a "tragic, missed opportunity" to end the bloodshed.



Casolo talks to the press on her arrival in New York. (Reuters wirephoto)

Carter to probe campaign riots

Nicaragua polls

MANAGUA, Dec 15, (AP): Former president Jimmy Carter said he will investigate a political campaign battle between opponents and supporters of the leftist Sandinista government that left one person dead and more than 20 injured.

"We hope to determine the causes of this violence," he told reporters shortly after his arrival.

Carter was leading a delegation of observers invited by both the government and the opposition to monitor the process leading up to national elections Feb 25.

Sandinistas and leaders of the National Opposition Union have been accusing each other of inciting the Dec 10 riot in Masatepe, a town 30 miles south of Managua. In addition to the death and injuries, a Sandinista campaign office and a private home were looted and two vehicles were burned.

It was the worst outbreak of violence in the two-month-old election campaign for president, vice-president, a new legislature and municipal authorities nationwide.

The Centre for Democracy, a Washington-based observer group, immediately blamed the Sandinistas. But, the Organisation of American States said its observers could not determine who was responsible, although it concluded that the riot was deliberately provoked.

Carter said that so far he is pleased that all sides in the campaign are intent on having free and fair elections.

Carter was accompanied by his wife Rosalynn, former Sen. Daniel Evans and former Costa Rican President Daniel Oduber. They will spend three days travelling to various towns in Nicaragua, talking to OAS and United Nations observer groups about the electoral process.

At a summit this week, five Central American presidents called for disbanding of US-supported Contra rebels and Salvadoran leftist guerrillas.

Carter said he would like to see the money Congress has approved for the Contras channelled through a commission set up to oversee their demobilisation.

Debate over legalising drugs

WASHINGTON, Dec 15, (AP): Marijuana is no more harmful than alcohol, says National Drug Control policy director William J. Bennett, but he still strongly opposes efforts to legalise it or any other drug.

"The last thing I would want to do is recommend the wider use of a drug that makes young people stupid," Bennett said in an interview last week as he launched yet another counter-offensive against the increasingly visible and volatile drug legalisation movement.

Meanwhile, a US judge who for the first time joined the ranks of drug legalisation advocates repeated his comments yesterday.

US district Judge Robert W. Sweet — a Republican and former prosecutor appointed by then-president Jimmy Carter as a trial judge in the southern district of New York — had said in a speech that drugs, including cocaine and heroin, should be legalised, taxed and dispensed by the state because the war on drugs is being lost.

Interviewed yesterday on a US television network news show, Sweet said, "I have been surprised" by the furor raised by his suggestion. "This is a huge industry, \$150 billions. It ought to be taxed, regulated."

Terrence Burke, acting deputy director of the US Drug Enforcement Administration, said on the same programme that he was "outraged" by Sweet's proposal.

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Seize drugs men: US orders

NEW YORK, Dec 15, (Reuters): The Defence Department has authorised US military units to seize drug suspects in other countries and bring them to the United States for trial, a US television network reported yesterday.

The CBS report, citing Pentagon officials, said a hostage rescue team was among the units to be used to capture drug criminals abroad who are wanted on US charges.

A Pentagon spokesman would not comment on the report.

The network said it was not known whether President George Bush himself had given the go-ahead, but said Defence Secretary Dick Cheney late last summer had begun preparing an attempt to seize a suspected Colombian cocaine kingpin in Panama.

CBS said an informant had reported suspect Pablo Escobar was hiding out at a seaside villa in Panama and Cheney ordered troops and helicopters moved to a US base in Puerto Rico in preparation for an attempt to seize him, despite warnings that American soldiers could be killed in such an effort.

The operation was scrubbed, the network said, because the tip was given only a 70 per cent chance of being accurate. It later turned out that Escobar was not even in Panama, CBS said.

US officials say it would not violate a ban against assassination if a suspect were killed in an operation to seize him, the network said.

It reported Pentagon officials as saying that in connection with the Escobar operation they were prepared to consult Congress under the War Powers Act, which requires notification whenever US forces go into a combat situation.

Despite concerns about security, US President George Bush is planning to go to violence-torn Colombia on Feb 15 for a four-nation summit on illegal drugs, the White House said.

The meeting, expected to last one day, will be in Cartagena on Colombia's north coast.

The region is infamous as a haven for cocaine druglords, who are waging a campaign of violence in retaliation for a crackdown by the government of President Virgilio Barco.

Other participants, in addition to Bush and Barco, will be President Alan Garcia of Peru and President Jaime Paz Zamora of Bolivia.

On Monday, Bush had expressed determination to attend the summit but said a final decision was still pending and, "I will not do anything imprudent."

President George Bush, declaring this country bears a heavy responsibility in combating "entrenched and powerful" international drug lords, signed legislation on Wednesday that includes \$125 million in assistance for Colombia, Peru and Bolivia.

In addition to the aid for the Andean nations, requested by Bush in August to buttress the efforts of President Virgilio Barco in his escalating war against narcotics, the bill also authorises up to \$115 million for global anti-drug efforts for other countries.

The US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) has offered to train Soviet KGB secret police to catch drug traffickers, a DEA spokesman said.

"The training would have to do with law enforcement," spokesman Frank Shults told Reuters.

If Moscow accepts it will be the first formal relationship between a US agency and the KGB, whose past duties have included spying on the United States, crushing internal dissent and investigating international criminals.

Aylwin wins Chilean presidential election

Pinochet acknowledges opposition victory

SANTIAGO, Dec 15, (AP): Opposition leader Patricio Aylwin triumphantly declared today that "Chile has refound her history" with his landslide election as the successor to military President Augusto Pinochet.

The victory triggered joyful street celebrations that stretched into the early hours of morning. Aylwin supporters danced, waved national flags and shot off fireworks on the downtown Santiago streets and in other cities nation-wide.

Pinochet, in a brief conversation with reporters, said he was not

disturbed by Aylwin's victory in yesterday's presidential election, the first in nearly 20 years. "They were better organised. They know how to do things," he said.

Interior Minister Carlos Caceres, a member of the Pinochet government that seized power in a bloody 1973 coup, said in a nationally broadcast address that authorities would abide by Aylwin's victory.

Official results from 93 per cent of all polling stations showed Aylwin had received 3,577,669 votes or 55.2 per cent of all valid ballots. He was supported by a coalition of 17 parties ranging from right to left.

Former Pinochet finance minister Hernan Buchi, the pro-government contender, had 1,901,668 votes or 29.4 per cent. A third candidate, populist businessman Francisco Errazuriz, received 998,786 or 15 per cent.

Buchi and Errazuriz paid separate visits to Aylwin to congratulate him.

Aylwin's absolute majority and 2-1 advantage over his nearest pro-government challenger appeared to give him the mandate for a possible upper hand in future relations with Pinochet, who has pledged to remain out of politics.

Much of Aylwin's future authority was expected to depend, however, on results from yesterday's voting for the 38 elected senate seats and 120 house of deputies seats. Up to 10 more senators are to be designated by the Supreme Court, National Security Council and other government bodies.

Conclusive returns in the congressional races were not expected until later Friday. However, there were indications from preliminary statistical returns that the pro-government forces may have made a better show in the congressional vote than Buchi did in the presidential race.

In a victory speech delivered early today from the third-floor terrace of a downtown hotel, Aylwin emphasised the need for national unity after years of political and social divisions.

"We want the unity of our country to build together a future in liberty and justice," he told a jubilant crowd of hundreds of people gathered on the street below.

"Chile has refound her history. Chile has regained liberty. Chile has regained democracy," he said.

Demonstrations are legally banned on election day, but in Santiago police did not interfere with the celebrations of Aylwin supporters. In fact, they suspended traffic on the city's main boulevard, Alameda Avenue, where the hotel is located, to allow Aylwin supporters to gather to listen to his victory speech.

But in the pacific resort city of Vina del Mar, national police used water cannons to clear the streets.

At the end of his speech, Aylwin urged the demonstrators to return quietly to their homes and prepare to attend a celebration rally scheduled for 6 pm (2100 GMT) today.

Pinochet was forced to call the election after losing a referendum in October of last year. Voters rejected a military proposal that Pinochet be allowed to remain in power until 1997.



Augusto Pinochet. (Reuters wirephoto)



Aylwin smiles after casting his vote Dec 14.

Extraditions' vote delayed

Bogota Senate lacks quorum

BOGOTA, Dec 15, (AP): The senate has failed to vote on whether to hold a national referendum on whether Colombia should continue extraditing drug-trafficking suspects because it lacked a quorum.

The senate had been expected to vote yesterday on the issue in defiance of President Virgilio Barco's opposition to allowing Colombians to vote on whether they want to continue the practice of alleged drug smugglers.

But the vote never took place because the senate couldn't get a quorum, reports said. The issue could come to a vote later today if a quorum can be gathered.

The senate's constitutional committee voted 15-4 Wednesday night to put the extradition question to a public vote next September. The panel's action represented a compromise with the House of Representatives, which voted to hold the referendum as part of an already planned plebiscite on Jan 21.

The Barco administration has sent nine drug-trafficking suspects to the United States to face charges there since it launched an anti-drug offensive in August. A counter-offensive by the cocaine trafficking cartels has led to the deaths of at least 188 people in 203 bombings.

Barco issued a plea on Wednesday opposing any referendum.

"I consider it highly undesirable to submit this subject to popular vote either in January or on whatever other date," Barco said. "Extradition is a fundamental mechanism in combatting impunity and is also a universally accepted tool of international law."

Both Barco and his Interior Minister, Carlos Lemos, have repeatedly criticised the extradition referendum as a concession to drug traffickers since a house committee first proposed it on Dec 1.

The traffickers have said they will unleash new terror attacks if the congress does not pass the referendum.

The house has already approved the bill 109-4, calling for a referendum on Jan 21. But the senate also must approve the measure before a vote can be held.

The directors of the ruling Liberal Party, as well as former presidents Julio Cesar Turbay and Misael Pastrana, resigned Wednesday night, minutes after a senate committee sent the bill to the full senate on a 15-4 vote.

Turbay and Pastrana said it was senseless for them to pretend they were guiding legislators who ignored their command to vote against a referendum.

Opponents of a referendum said they expected the drug cartels to unleash a new round of violence to pressure voters into ending the extraditions.

Duarte back in hospital

GUATEMALA CITY, Dec 15, (UPI): Former Salvadoran president Jose Napoleon Duarte, suffering from advanced stomach and liver cancer, has been hospitalised in Guatemala city, officials said.

Guatemalan President Vinicio Cerezo said Duarte's condition worsened Tuesday night and he was taken to a hospital in the capital.

He did not want to be taken to the United States and asked his family members to take him to El Salvador, Cerezo said.

Duarte had been receiving treatment at Walter Reed Army Medical Centre in Washington, where doctors removed three-fourths of his stomach in June 1988 after it was consumed by cancer.

The former Salvadoran president has been in Guatemala City since last month, apparently to escape the bloody offensive by leftist rebels at home.

But in the pacific resort city of Vina del Mar, national police used water cannons to clear the streets.

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UK censors movie on nun

Termed blasphemous

LONDON, Dec. (AP) The makers of "Visions of Ecstasy," a 20-minute video about the erotic fantasies of a 16th century Spanish nun, say they have lost their appeal against a ruling that the film can't be released because it is blasphemous.

Axel Ltd., the producers, said yesterday the video appeal committee had upheld the initial ruling by the British board of film classification that the film can't be released for public viewing.

It is the first film in 77 years refused a release certificate on grounds it violates Britain's little-used blasphemy law.

The law bans films, books and other matter held to blaspheme against Christianity but does not cover blasphemy against any other religion. It dates from the time Britain was a predominantly Christian nation before the influx of Muslim and other immigrants from Asia and elsewhere in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s.

The law originated when church and state were deemed indivisible and an attack on Christianity was regarded as subversion. It came under secular court jurisdiction in 1676.

Sections of the Church of England have called for the law to be scrapped on grounds it is out of date and that Christianity is strong enough to defend itself.

But some militants in other religions, including Muslims angered by the publication last year of Salman Rushdie's novel "The Satanic Verses" which they hold blasphemes Islam, want the law extended to cover their faiths.

The film's producer, John Stephenson, said the company is now considering a further appeal, this time to the high court in London, under a legal process known as judicial review of administrative procedures.

This allows judges to intervene if they find that a decision by non-judicial authorities such as the board or the committee was arrived at unfairly.

Stephenson said: "We condemn the decision as a disgraceful act of censorship. Free expression in relation to religion is a fundamental right in a pluralistic society."

The video shows St Teresa of Avila caressing the body of Christ on the Cross and amorously embracing another woman.

The producers say the scenes are clearly Teresa's imagination, and that the two women represent two sides of her personality.

Geoffrey Robertson, attorney for Axel Ltd., called the video an "imaginative, metaphoric" portrayal of religious ecstasy.

"It indicated that Christ had sex," James Ferman, the board's director, told last week's hearing by the committee, which has met just six times since it was created five years ago.

Ferman said he thought the video showed contempt for the divinity of Christ by presenting him as a living man, not a symbol, and as an object of sexual passion. He said he was particularly offended by the intercutting of the figure of Christ into the scene between the two women.



Lula speaks Dec 13 during a campaign rally for elections. (Reuters wirephoto)



Collor de Mello awaits beginning of the last debate. (Reuters wirephoto)



A supporter of Lula raises his daughter during a rally. (Reuters wirephoto)



Lula supporters dance in the streets during the political rally. (Reuters wirephoto)

Brazilian candidates take potshots at each other

RIO DE JANEIRO, Brazil, Dec 15. (AP) In a nationwide TV debate marred by personal insults and accusations, presidential candidates Luis Inacio "Lula" da Silva and Fernando Collor de Mello clashed on issues from foreign debt to urban reform.

Da Silva promised to suspend payments on Brazil's debt, the Third World's largest. His pro-business opponent favoured cuts in state spending and privatising several state-run companies to

address the economic crisis.

Last night's debate was the candidate's last encounter before Brazil's runoff presidential election on Sunday.

Commentators labelled the two-and-a-half hour encounter a draw.

The debate, considered a crucial test because both candidates are virtually deadlocked in nationwide polls, was dominated by the type of personal barbs that have marred the final week of the campaign.

Collor de Mello called his stocky, bearded rival "intolerant" and "backward." He said Da Silva's radical Workers Party would prompt nationwide strikes, land invasions and economic chaos if the socialist was elected.

Lula, as Da Silva is known here, labelled Collor de Mello an "emotionally unstable" candidate. He tried to depict his adversary as a "member of the dominant, archaic upper class" and the new face of the political right.

An opinion poll published yesterday showed Collor de Mello clinging to a one percentage point lead over Lula. Just two weeks ago, Collor de Mello had a 15 point lead.

During the debate, both candidates ducked questions on how to deal with inflation, which economists say could reach 2,000 percent by mid-March, when the new president takes office. The cost of living was expected to rise 50 per cent in December alone.

Call for wider passageways

Plane emergencies

LONDON, Dec 15. (AP) The Civil Aviation Authority has called for wider aircraft passageways to make it easier for passengers to escape in emergencies.

The recommendation came as the CAA released the results of a two-year research programme commissioned after 55 people died in a British Airtours 737 that burst into flames at Manchester airport in 1985.

The authority proposed a new European requirement to widen passageways through aircraft to a new minimum of 30 inches (76 cms), compared with the present 20-inch (51 cms) international minimum.

A spokesman for British Airways, which operated British Airtours charters, said the current standard width of passageways on the airline's 737s was 22 inches (56 cms) though new 737s had 27-inch (69 cms) passageways.

He said the CAA recommendations would be subjected to further research and discussion within the industry.

The research, carried out by the applied psychology unit of the Cranfield Institute of Technology in Bedfordshire, found that the tendency for people to block each other in the passageway through a bulkhead could be significantly reduced when the opening was 30 inches (76 cms) or more.

During the Manchester disaster, some passengers sitting close to the over-wing exit died, while others managed to make their way the entire length of the aircraft from seats at the back to escape through front exits. The pattern was repeated in the tests, the CAA said.

Aircraft accident reports suggested that young, fit men had the best chance of survival and that women were more likely to survive than men. This was supported by the findings in the tests, the CAA said.

Video film showed the volunteers treading on each other, shoving and fighting to get out as they became jammed, while cabin crew screamed instructions. Some volunteers would have been trampled unseen in the rush if the evacuations had not been stopped.

After the Manchester disaster, the CAA ordered the gap between seats in front of the over-wing exits be widened and the seats made more rigid. Only Britain and France adapted their aircraft to those standards.

Ron Ashford, the CAA's group director in charge of safety regulations, said he believed the industry would respond well to their findings on the gap between the bulkheads. It would not mean fewer seats, but would mean fundamental structural changes to the galley and wardrobe areas, he said.

More than a dozen pilots have reported problems with rudder controls on Boeing 737s since one of the planes skidded off a New York airport runway with a similar complaint, two federal agencies say.

The Federal Aviation Administration and the National Transportation Safety Board said on Tuesday they have asked Boeing Co. to provide data on any reports it has received before or since the New York accident on rudders set in unexpected positions on its 737-300 and 737-400 model jets.

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INTERNATIONAL

Alarm over disks on Aids

LONDON, Dec 15, (AP): A computer disk on Aids that was mailed to people in Europe, Africa and the United States contains a "virus" that has sabotaged information in some personal computers, police and news reports said.

"We've received thousands of calls about these disks. We know that at least 10,000 have been sent out. We are not naming any recipients," said a Scotland Yard spokeswoman, who by custom was not identified.

"We are now treating it as a crime of criminal damage and blackmail," the spokeswoman added. She said an investigation had been opened.

Scotland Yard said that electronic codes on the floppy disks labelled "Aids information introductory diskette" have destroyed information in at least 10 computers in Britain.

The London newspaper the Independent reported yesterday that rumours in the computer world put the figure much higher and that hospital systems were among those damaged. It said the disks also turned up in the US state of California, Belgium and Zimbabwe but gave no details about precisely where.

Officials and news reports also reported the disks in Sweden, Norway and Denmark.

Computer viruses are pieces of software that reproduce themselves and spread from one machine to another through infected floppy disks, office networks or telephone lines. They erode a computer's processing power and storage space, or destroy information.

The Guardian newspaper said the disks' programme contains "A Trojan Horse computer virus" that attacks IBM personal computers. International Business Machines is one of the world's biggest makers of computers.

In Sweden, the state bacteriological laboratory sent letters to clinics and doctors working with Aids warning them about the disk.



End-of-term ceremony

South African youngsters dressed in academic robes and mortar board watch an end-of-term ceremony Dec 14 at a pre-school in the black township of Tsakane outside Johannesburg. (Reuter wirephoto)

French take control of Comoros

Mercenaries leave

PARIS, Dec 15, (AP): French troops landed today at Moroni airport in the troubled Comoros Islands, taking control of the country's security in what the Defence Ministry called a "military assistance mission" requested by the Comoros government.

Four hours later, French mercenary Bob Denard and about 25 other European soldiers of fortune who trained and led the 600-man Comorian presidential guard boarded a South African military plane and left for South Africa, the French news agency Agence France-Presse reported.

The mercenaries had controlled the island nation, a former French colony, since the country's president was assassinated Nov 26.

A military spokesman said the French troops came from the French Indian Ocean Island of Mayotte, 300 kilometres (185 miles) away, in an operation under the French-Comorian defence co-operation agreement.

Yesterday, AFP reported that Denard was willing to relinquish control if the safety of his men was guaranteed and if he and his fellow mercenaries were given an unspecified payment. It was unclear today if those demands were honoured.

The Johannesburg Star newspaper reported that South African authorities planned to issue Denard a temporary residence permit on condition he agreed to leave that country within a month.

Both President Francois Mitterrand and Defence Minister Jean-Pierre Chevenement stressed earlier this week that there would be no French military intervention in the Comoros, in turmoil since the assassination of President Ahmed Abdallah Abderrahman.

AFP reported from Moroni, the capital of the Comoros, that 50 French paratroopers in helicopters landed at 9 am (0600 GMT) to take over control of the archipelago from the presidential guard. They were followed by two transport planes full of troops.

Denard and the presidential guard had been in control of the islands since the president's assassination.

AFP reported that as the first aircraft landed at Habaya airport in Moroni, about 250 presidential guardsmen stood at attention at one end of the runway. Denard also was at the airport, dressed in civilian clothes.

UN raps SA for its racist policies

UNITED NATIONS, Dec 15, (AP): The General Assembly, speaking with one voice, has unanimously condemned South Africa's apartheid system as "a crime against the conscience and dignity of mankind" and demanded its abolition.

In South Africa, Foreign Minister P. W. Botha issued a statement describing the UN declaration as "fundamentally flawed and unacceptable to the South African government."

The declaration represents a victory for black African nations, who for the first time in the UN's history reached a compromise with the United States and Britain on the subject of apartheid. The declaration was adopted by consensus yesterday.

The delegates then stood for a moment of silent meditation at the close of the three-day special session on apartheid.

"A declaration, however solemn and however unanimous, will not itself help the people of South Africa in their efforts to create a new and non-racial society," said the assembly's president, Joseph Garba of Nigeria.

"But it will lend tremendous power to our arguments hereafter when addressing proponents of apartheid, whether inside or outside South Africa." To win US and British support, the Africans diluted a statement proposed by the Organisation of African Unity, abandoning a demand for increased sanctions against South Africa and an interim government during the transition to a non-racial democracy.

Instead, the declaration raises the possibility of lifting trade embargoes if Pretoria begins repealing apartheid within six months.

The declaration pledges that the world community will "not relax existing measures aimed at encouraging the South African regime to eradicate apartheid, until there is clear evidence of profound and irreversible changes."

It then asks Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar to report by July 1 on South Africa's progress in abolishing apartheid.

Delegates from 118 nations, including President Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia and Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, castigated South Africa's racial segregation policies during three days of debate.

The Security Council has a mandatory arms embargo on South Africa, and the General Assembly has called on all nations to voluntarily isolate the country economically, socially and culturally.

The United States and Britain have always used their veto power in the Security Council to block more sweeping mandatory sanctions to isolate South Africa.

Anti-apartheid leaders freed

S. African court overturns verdict

JOHANNESBURG, Dec 15, (Agencies): Three prominent anti-apartheid leaders jailed since 1985 were ordered freed today by the country's high court, which overturned treason convictions imposed after a controversial three-year trial.

The three leaders of the United Democratic Front and one of their co-defendants, a church worker, were convicted of treason in November 1988. Their sentence ranged from 6 to 12 years.

The appeal court in Bloemfontein overturned the verdicts against those four black activists and seven co-defendants convicted of terrorism. One of the seven had received a five-year prison term and the others suspended sentences.

The appeal court accepted defence lawyers' arguments that the trial judge, Kees Van Dijkhorst, improperly dismissed one of the two legal experts assisting him in the trial.

Van Dijkhorst had said the law professor, W. A. Joubert, was too sympathetic to the United Democratic Front because he had signed a UDF-supported petition opposing a new constitution that entrenched racially segregated politics.

During the trial, most of the defendants were granted bail. But Van Dijkhorst repeatedly denied bail requests by the three senior leaders of the UDF, a huge multiracial coalition formed in 1983 to campaign militantly, but peacefully, for black political rights.

Van Dijkhorst had ruled that the UDF was a "revolutionary organisation" that incited violence in black townships in 1984 in a bid to render South Africa ungovernable.

The charges arose from violence and mob killings that broke out in black townships south of Johannesburg in September 1984, the start of two years of nation-wide black unrest in which more than 2,500 people were killed.

Patrick "Terror" Lekota, 41, the UDF's publicity secretary, was sentenced to 12 years in prison; Pope Molefe, 37, the UDF's national secretary, and Moses Chikane, 41, secretary of the Transvaal province branch, were sentenced to 19 years. The Rev. Tom Mantshe, 49, a church field worker, was sentenced to 10 years.

The trial began in 1985 in the small farming town of Delmas and later was shifted to Pretoria. Eleven of the original 22 defendants were acquitted at various stages.

The four men convicted of treason were imprisoned on Robben Island, in Cape Town's harbour, where many political and security prisoners have been held. Friends and relatives gathered at a ferry dock in Cape Town today awaiting their arrival.

All four men were married and have children. Lekota and Chikane each have daughters who were born after they were jailed in 1985 and who have never seen their fathers as free men.

The trial was one of the longest in South African history, with 439 days of court proceedings spread over more than three years. The 368-page indictment named more than 900 alleged co-conspirators, ranging from Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu to African National Congress leader Oliver Tambo. There were more than 220 witnesses and the office court record ran to about 30,000.

Jailed black leader Nelson Mandela, fresh from a surprise meeting with President F. W. de Klerk, resumes talks with South Africa's black opposition next week, it was disclosed yesterday.

News of the scheduled meeting with trade union leaders broke amid speculation that his discussions with De Klerk on Wednesday was to discuss black participation in negotiating a new constitution.

De Klerk's meeting with Mandela was part of a government effort to drive a wedge between the jailed black leaders and his colleagues outside prison. Walter Sisulu said yesterday.

The magistrate, prosecutor and defence lawyer agreed yesterday that times are changing. The result: unusually lenient sentences for two black women convicted of aiding the outlawed African National Congress.

The women, both reporters for an anti-apartheid community newspaper, joined supporters in jubilant freedom songs after magistrate J. M. Lemmer gave them suspended five-year prison terms and let them go free.

Velmiswa Mhlawuli, 36, had pleaded guilty to accommodating four ANC members. Linda Tsotsi, 33, was convicted of receiving ANC military training in Angola and returning to South Africa to recruit for the guerrilla movement.



Black death-row prisoner and former policeman Nofomela (center) shown consulting his lawyer during an appearance in Pietermaritzburg Court. (Reuter wirephoto)

Hit squad killings

Ex-cop tells all

PIETERMARITZBURG, South Africa, Dec 15, (Reuter): A black death-row prisoner, the first ex-policeman to allege the existence of South African police assassination squads, told a court yesterday he killed government opponents on orders from superiors.

Pleading guilty to the murder of human rights lawyer Griffiths Mxenge, Almond Nofomela said: "I was a member of the security police seconded to a police assassination squad under the command of Captain Dirk Coetsee and Brigadier Schoon."

"In late 1981, I was instructed by Brigadier Schoon to eliminate (kill) a certain Durban attorney Griffiths Mxenge," he told the packed court in this Natal provincial capital.

Nofomela and two friends were sentenced to death in 1987 for the murder of a white farmer during a robbery. But just before he was due to be hanged he won a stay of execution by pleading that he helped to kill Mxenge and eight others on police instructions.

Nofomela said he spoke out to save his life after police associates promised to halt his execution but failed to act. Coetsee backed his allegations in an interview with an anti-apartheid newspaper in which he said he commanded the death squad.

The other policeman mentioned by Nofomela is Willem Schoon, a senior officer who retired from the force earlier this year. The allegations shocked the South African public and provoked widespread calls for a judicial inquiry into dozens of unsolved murders of opposition activists.

Human rights activists and government opponents have for years feared that police might be failing to find the killers because their colleagues were implicated.

Soviets back Thai solution

Cambodia conflict

BANGKOK, Dec 15, (AP): A Soviet deputy foreign minister today endorsed Thailand's idea of addressing the Cambodian conflict in stages if a single comprehensive solution was not possible, a Thai spokesman said.

Igor Rogachev made the comment in a meeting with Thai Foreign Minister Siddhi Savetsila, said Surapong Jayanama, the deputy spokesman of the Foreign Ministry.

Rogachev met with Prime Minister Chatichai Choonhavan earlier in the day. Details were not immediately available.

Chatichai has noted the lack of progress toward a settlement that simultaneously tackled all the major issues, including a halt to the fighting and the make-up of a future government.

He has suggested that the combatants first agree to a ceasefire and international verification of Vietnam's troop pullout before tackling other issues.

The Soviet Union arms the forces of Cambodia's Vietnamese-installed government in its nearly 11-year-old war with three guerrilla groups backed by Thailand and China. The Thai spokesman said that in the meeting with Siddhi, Rogachev repeated Moscow's call for ending foreign military aid to both sides.

Rogachev told Siddhi the next round of peace talks, now being organised by Indonesia, should be held as soon as possible.

"Thailand wants the Cambodian war to end as soon as possible," the Thai spokesman quoted Siddhi as telling Rogachev.

Rogachev arrived in Thailand after discussing the Cambodian issue in visits to Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. He is to leave for Japan tomorrow.

Rogachev told a news conference yesterday that Australia's proposal for establishing an interim UN authority in Cambodia was timely and worth discussing.

Australian Deputy Secretary of Foreign Affairs Michael Costello was to discuss the idea with Chinese officials today. Costello already has met with officials in Bangkok, Hanoi and Phnom Penh.

Rogachev said both Vietnam and its allied government in Phnom Penh welcomed the proposal. He quoted Phnom Penh's Premier Hun Sen as saying the next round of peace talks should be held as soon as possible to discuss the Australian and other proposals.

Aids virus can remain undetected for three and a half years

BOSTON, Dec 15, (UPI): The Aids virus can hide in the body and evade easy detection longer than had been previously reported, researchers said yesterday.

A new study found it can take up to 3-1/2 years before the body begins producing antibodies to the Aids virus that can be detected by standard tests, such as those used to screen blood donors.

Most people begin producing antibodies to the virus within 12 weeks of being infected. There have been previous reports of longer "window periods." But the new report tells of the longest such "window" ever published in the medical literature said Dr Steven Wolinsky, the Northwestern University

researchers who led the study. The findings underscore the importance of preventing people who are most likely to be infected from donating blood in order to minimise the chances of transmitting the virus through transfusions, the researchers said.

"You can't exclude the fact that a silent reservoir of HIV-infected persons exists," said Wolinsky, an assistant professor at Northwestern Medical School in Chicago.

"This stresses the importance of self-deferral by any person that has practised activities that have put him at high-risk for acquiring the virus," said Wolinsky, who published his findings in the annals

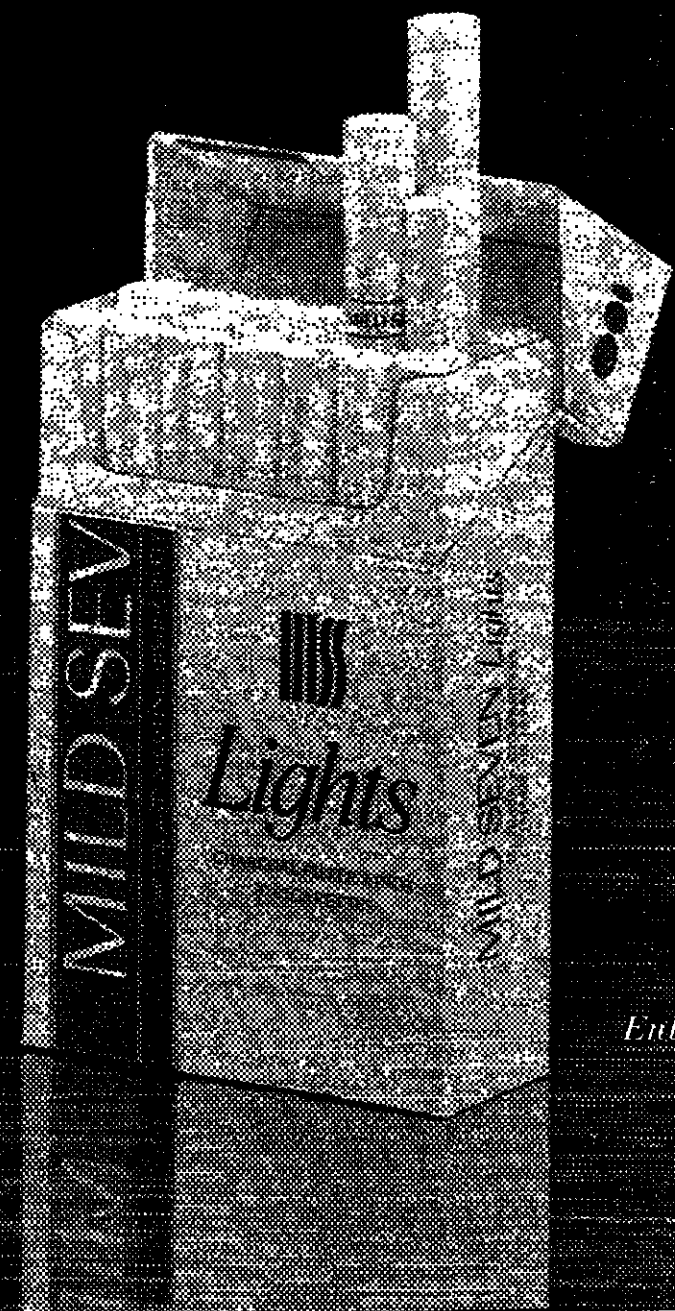
of Internal Medicine. The study also raises the possibility that infected persons will engage in behaviour that can transmit the virus believing they are Aids-free because they test negatively on standard tests.

Wolinsky stressed, however, that the study was based on homosexual men who were at high risk for being infected with the virus and may not be representative of the general population.

Aids patients' blood contains hundreds of times more virus than doctors once thought, and a single infected syringe may carry enough to cause 700 infections, according to a study published yesterday.

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Boat people stage third day of protest

Thatcher effigy burnt during march

HONG KONG, Dec 15, (Agencies): Thousands of Vietnamese facing repatriation against their will staged a third day of protests today, burning an effigy of British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.

Meanwhile, the governor said no more boat people will be sent home before Christmas. At least 11,000 boat people in five camps around this British colony participated today in the demonstrations, which have grown daily since the pre-dawn forced repatriation of 51 boat people Tuesday.

The protesters are among about 44,000 Vietnamese who have sailed into Hong Kong since June 1988 and are considered illegal "economic

migrants" unless they can prove they fled their communist homeland fearing persecution.

Nearly 6,800 have been denied refugee status after being screened by immigration officials and face repatriation. Slightly more than 700 have qualified for overseas resettlement.

Although the protests have been peaceful, about 100 Vietnamese late yesterday attacked a prison officer with iron bars as he investigated a crowd gathering inside the Chi Ma Wan camp. The officer suffered minor injuries.



Vietnamese boat people hold a peaceful demonstration inside the Sham Shui Po detention centre in Hong Kong. (Reuters wirephoto)

Today, about 4,000 boat people marched inside the Whitehead detention centre in the New Territories. Another 2,500 boat people chanted slogans as they marched at the High Island reception centre, the government said.

About 550 people staged a sit-in at Sek Kong detention centre in the New Territories, another 3,000 participated in the third day of protest marches at Hei Ling Chau camp on an outlying island, and 1,000 Vietnamese demonstrated at Sham Shui Po detention centre in urban Kowloon.

An effigy of Mrs Thatcher, who has strongly defended the forced repatriation from the British colony, was burned at the Sham Shui Po protest, a government spokesman said.

Governor Sir David Wilson today said more Vietnamese would be repatriated against their will, but added that there were no plans to send any back in the coming days.

"We haven't got a flight plan for Christmas," he said.

Wilson acknowledged the programme has led to widespread international criticism, but some said none of the critics have offered a viable alternative to solve the problem posed by the massive influx of boat people.

Journalists have not been allowed inside the detention centres in recent weeks, but relief agencies say the atmosphere is tense.

Jim Campion of Refugee Concern Hong Kong, an advocacy group for the boat people, said there was concern the forced repatriation policy would lead to suicide attempts among the boat people.

A Vietnamese man attempted suicide by hanging in Chi Ma Wan camp yesterday, but a government statement said the incident did not appear connected to the forced repatriation programme.

About 56,000 Vietnamese are housed in squalid camps in Hong Kong, and only 4,500 have been resettled so far this year. Britain argues returning the boat people is more human than keeping them indefinitely in crowded centres that are rife with violence and disease.

Britain will not forcibly repatriate any more Vietnamese boat people from Hong Kong's cramped detention centres until after Christmas, Sir David Wilson said today.

Boat people protested this week's forced repatriation for the third straight day, waving banners and shouting slogans and staging sit-ins in five camps. No violence was reported.

He said authorities were not backing away from more repatriations due to international criticism but there never had been a plan for a second flight before Christmas.

Mark Pinkstone, the government's chief information officer, said it was logistically impossible for Hong Kong to force a second group of boat people back to their homeland this month. And also that Hanoi wants to assess the impact of the first flight.

Here are some statistics on Vietnamese boat people: Camp populations

- Hong Kong — 56,136
- Philippines — 24,802
- Malaysia — 20,244
- Thailand — 14,000
- Japan — 2,150
- Singapore — 408

Uproar at HK immigration

LONDON, Dec 15, (Reuters): Members of Parliament from among Britain's ruling Conservatives warned the government yesterday it would face a revolt if it tried to pass a law allowing an estimated 150,000 Hong Kong Chinese into Britain.

One of the non-cabinet Conservative members said the scheme would go through only over his dead body.

The message to Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher was that the prospect of more than 150,000 Hong Kong Chinese being allowed to settle in Britain after the colony is handed back to China in 1997 would lead to open rebellion.

There was uproar at a parliamentary committee meeting of conservatives, where 20 were reported to have spoken against relaxing immigration laws and only five backed the government.

Tigers devour rivals: 250 die

COLOMBO, Dec 15, (UPI): Sporadic fighting continued in the eastern provincial capital of Batticaloa where Tiger rebels routed the Indian-recruited Tamil National Army, killing more than 250 TNA militiamen, witnesses and officials said yesterday.

Rebels of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam conducted house-to-house searches for fleeing TNA militiamen and church bells sounded in the city as the death toll continued to mount following fierce battles that erupted on Wednesday.

Indian troops hastily recruited the TNA and planned to leave it in control of Tamil areas following the departure of the Indian peace-keeping force. But the TNA lacks experience and was routed twice before the Tamil Tigers, who have fought 10 years against Sri Lanka and Indian forces.

Tiger rebels set up checkpoints yesterday and drove around town using loudspeakers to urge TNA militiamen to surrender. Residents hid in their homes. Stores opened for about an hour and were quickly shuttered. Little traffic moved on the streets.

"The entire town area resembles one funeral home," a resident said by telephone from Batticaloa. "People are really scared to move around."

More than 250 TNA militiamen have been reported killed in the fighting, which began early Wednesday when Tiger rebels attacked the TNA camps. Fierce battles continued throughout Wednesday and the Tigers routed the militia.

The mortuary of Batticaloa hospital had 85 bodies from Wednesday's fighting and 42 more were still lying in downtown streets, a senior police official said. Other bodies were strewn around outlying areas of the city.

Police found 25 bodies of suspected Sinhalese radicals, burned or shot to death by vigilantes in central and southern Sri Lanka, military officials said today.

Most of the victims were Sinhalese men between the ages of 18 and 30, said the officials. They said the bodies were discovered during the 24-hour period ending at 8 am (0230 GMT) today.

Plans to limit legislative polls

China dashes HK hopes

HONG KONG, Dec 15, (Agencies): China dashed Hong Kong hopes for widespread democracy after its handover to Beijing by declaring today that only one third of the post-1997 legislature will be returned by direct elections.

The Chinese-dominated committee responsible for drawing up Hong Kong's future constitution told report-

ers only 18 of the 60-member legislative council would be directly elected by 1997. The 55-member team, reduced by two since Beijing expelled two Hong Kong liberals last month, was meeting in the southern China city of Canton, just across the border from the British colony.

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Wuer Kaixi raps overtures US slammed

HONG KONG, Dec 15, (Reuters): Wuer Kaixi, a student dissident leader, was criticised by the United States yesterday for trying to mend ties with Beijing.

"It seems (US) President (George) Bush has forgotten his promise to stand by the Chinese people," he told a news conference in Tokyo.

Wuer Kaixi, who is on Beijing's wanted list, criticised last weekend's meeting in the Chinese capital between Bush's National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft and senior Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping.

He said sending envoys to meet Deng "will not help the Chinese people, the American people or the world as a whole."

"The US government announced that both sides have made efforts to settle their differences," he said.

Bush banned high-level visits and military sales to China after the June 4 action.

His administration has defended its decision to send Scowcroft to China to brief Chinese leaders on the recent US-Soviet summit by saying Beijing should not be politically



Wuer Kaixi, 21, has been vilified in the state-controlled Chinese press for his part in helping lead the democracy movement.

Top-level Sino-US contacts criticised

WASHINGTON, Dec 15, (AP): Democratic congressmen have attacked President George Bush's decision to dispatch high-level officials to confer with the leaders of China, and pledged punitive sanctions against that country.

They also complained that the White House refused to permit one of those officials to come to Capitol Hill to defend the action.

Democratic legislators vowed to press early next year for punitive sanctions against the Chinese government and said they could prevail even if Bush vetoes the bill.

Absent from the hearing convened by two congressional foreign affairs subcommittees was Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence F. Eagleburger, who visited Beijing last weekend with Brent Scowcroft, Bush's national security adviser.

"It seems the Bush administration is willing to send Mr Eagleburger six thousand miles to apologise to the Chinese leaders, but it was not willing to send him two miles to Capitol Hill to explain this action to Congress," said Congressman Sam Gejdenson.

Republican Congressman Jim Leach defended Bush, saying: "I don't know of a soul who believes that the Scowcroft mission went to Beijing to apologise to the Chinese."

"This Congress and this administration have no intention of kowtowing to illegitimate Chinese actions," Leach said.

He added that he believes the United States has an obligation to take whatever steps it can to persuade the Chinese to lift the "yoke of political oppression."

He added that the Scowcroft-Eagleburger mission can be seen as a test of the ability of outside parties to "help extricate a proud nation from an embarrassing corner."

As congressmen wrangled over the issue, Senate Majority leader George Mitchell weighed in on behalf of those who contend Bush made a serious blunder in sending Scowcroft and Eagleburger to Beijing.

Despite fierce public denunciations of Tibet's Dalai Lama, China is quietly pursuing efforts to hold its first talks with the exiled spiritual leader in more than 30 years, diplomats said today.

China has intensified its attacks since the 54-year-old Buddhist priest won the Nobel peace prize in October and has tightened security in Lhasa, the regional capital, which has been under martial law since anti-Chinese protests in March.

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Brigadier General Rodolfo Biazon shouts orders to his men at Camp Aguinaldo during the height of the Dec 1 coup against Aquino government by rebel soldiers in Manila. (Reuter wirephoto)

'Situation is a bit explosive'

Sin criticises Cory

(Continued from Page 1)

rebels were planning a new strike in the central Visayas islands and Mindanao.

Caniesso, a retired major general and former army commander, said 60 per cent of the 160,000-member armed forces would accept whatever government emerged victorious in a future coup.

Defence Secretary Fidel Ramos recommended restoring the death penalty as a deterrent against rebellion.

Ramos today asked the administration to seek congressional approval to increase the maximum penalty for rebellion from 12 years imprisonment to execution.

Capital punishment was abolished by the 1987 constitution but it allowed congress to restore it for "heinous crimes".

Aquino told businessmen the coup attempt shows the Philippines cannot return to "traditional modes of economic behaviour" that enrich only a small portion of the population.

Police in Manila went on full alert as new coup rumours swept this nervous capital despite government claims it has control of the situation.

Prices tumbled in early trading on the Manila stock exchange until the state social security system and other institutional investors intervened to prevent a possible collapse.

Traders attributed the panic selling to yesterday's grenade attack on an American housing and recreational compound. There were no injuries and minor

damage. But the incident raised fears of terrorism by remnants of military mutineers who tried to topple Aquino.

The exchange's composite index of 25 selected issues plunged 59.73 points to close at 1,002.81, down 5.62 per cent from yesterday's finish. Before the rally, exchange President Gerardo Urban warned the market was "collapsing and it has lost its sanity".

Archbishop Jaime L. Sin called for stern punishment for mutineers but also criticised the Aquino administration.

"The perpetrators of the coup must definitely be hunted down and punished," Sin told a conference of Filipino ambassadors. "But beyond that, the presidency must be freed of every taint of nepotism. The fruits of economic recovery must be distributed more equitably."

The country appears quiet for the moment, Sin said, but warned it was "like the silence in the eye of a typhoon."

"Unsettling is the actual inefficiency in many branches of government," he said. "Unsettling are the unceasing reports of the undue influence of presidential relatives in official government policy... unsettling is the omnipresence still of so much poverty, so much suffering in our country."

Aquino alluded to criticism from Sin and others that her government has failed to uplift the majority of the 58 million Filipinos.

World News Roundup

America

Advance in superconductivity: Bell Communications Research said Wednesday its researchers had built multi-layered superconducting materials that could someday be used for switches in extremely fast and sensitive electronic devices.

In the short run, the materials could be used as delicate detectors of magnetic fields in telecommunications systems, according to Bellcore, the research arm of the regional Bell telephone companies.

Eventually they could be used for high-speed switches in telecommunications systems or as computer logic gates, one of the key building blocks of computer circuits, Bellcore said. (AP)

Woman gets \$43.2 million: A woman from Nigeria whose husband and two daughters burned to death in a 1982 automobile fire won a \$43.2 million lawsuit judgement against Toyota Motor Sales USA Inc. and Toyota Corp., her attorney said Thursday.

A jury Wednesday awarded actual and punitive damages to Nike Adegbite, 36, who escaped with only minor burns and cuts from the 1973 Toyota Corona station wagon when it caught fire after being rear-ended by a van. The trial lasted six weeks.

San Francisco, Mrs Adegbite's attorney said Thursday that the lawsuit claimed Toyota was negligent in its design of the station wagon and failed to recall it. (AP)

Nativity scene finds home: A Nativity scene sanctioned five years ago by the US Supreme Court has a new home, but neither religious nor civil liberties activists are happy with the location — a monkey house at the local zoo.

The ensemble of statues depicting the birth of Jesus became the centre of a national controversy in 1980, when the American Civil Liberties Union filed a lawsuit arguing that the city of Pawtucket violated the US constitution by erecting the Nativity scene on public property.

The ACLU, a private organisation dedicated to preserving individual freedoms, argued that the city was showing official support for Christianity and thereby violating the constitution's guarantee of freedom of religion.

The US Supreme Court ruled by a 5-4 vote in 1984 that the Nativity scene could be erected because it contained secular elements, such as Santa's reindeer, a wishing well and candy canes. (AP)

Nurse convicted of killings: A nurse dubbed the "angel of death" was convicted Thursday of killing four patients by injecting them with a powerful drug in a scheme to revive them and look like a hero.

A jury deliberated eight days before finding 27-year-old Richard Angelo guilty of murder in two deaths, manslaughter in one and criminally negligent homicide in the fourth. All four deaths occurred in 1987 at a hospital on Long Island, east of New York city.

Angelo also was convicted of assault in connection with the four deaths and on three counts of assault for giving injections to a patient who survived. He was acquitted of assault in connection with two other patients whose deaths could not conclusively be linked to injections. (AP)

Boys sentenced to life: A 14-year-old boy was sentenced to life imprisonment with no option of parole for twice raping an elderly woman when he was 13.

Joe Harris Sullivan showed no emotion when he was sentenced Tuesday, according to his attorney, Mack Plant.

"He is beyond help," circuit judge Nicholas Geeker said. "The juvenile system has been utterly incapable of doing anything with Sullivan."

Assistant state attorney Larry Kaden told the judge that regardless of the boy's age, he deserved the maximum sentence because of his long criminal history, including an assault on a mental health clinic counselor and a burglary during which he killed a dog. (AP)

Mauled to death by dogs: A man who complained to police that he was attacked by dogs has been mauled to death, apparently by the same animals, authorities said.

"He appeared to have been eaten alive. That's the only way to describe it," said Bill Delaney, a ranch caretaker who discovered the body.

Accidental

Distant star discovered

BALTIMORE, Dec 15, (AP) Astronomers have stumbled on the most distant known star in the Milky Way, and say the accidental discovery could help determine the total mass of the galaxy.

That includes mysterious invisible matter that astronomers know exists but are unable to identify, an astronomer with the Space Telescope Science Institute said in an interview.

"Astronomers suspect that there is a lot of additional material surrounding our galaxy that doesn't give off light," said Hoard Bond, who along with two others discovered the distant star last spring.

"We don't know the mass of the Milky Way, but if we can find objects that are far out and measure their speed, it will help us determine the galaxy's total mass — the visible areas and the dark areas."

Astronomers use the speed of stars to determine gravitational pull upon them, and, from its gravity, the mass of the galaxy.

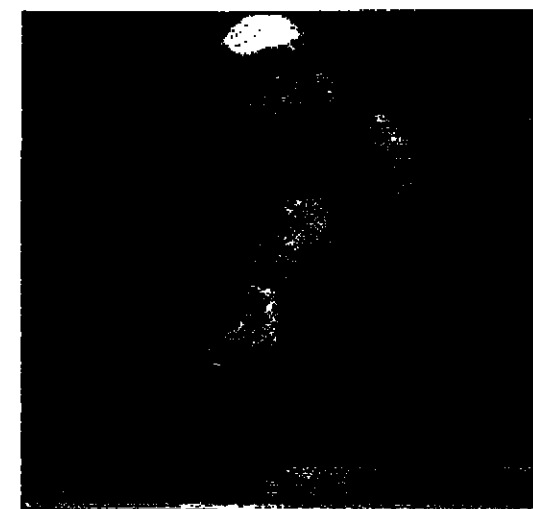
Astronomers theorise the galaxy's dark matter could be dim stars that are too faint to be seen, black hole remnants of massive stars that exploded early in the galaxy's history or some unknown type of subatomic particle, Bond said.

"We used to think that the majority of the mass of the Milky Way was stars, but now we suspect stars may only be 10 per cent of all the mass," he said. Once the mystery of the dark matter is solved, he said, "we may find something completely unexpected that could revolutionise our thinking about physics."



Jaguar to go ahead

Jaguar's 200 mph-plus XJ220, which is to go ahead with a limited production run of 220 cars, was announced Dec 14 in London. The new car



Stars protest aid to Salvador

Actor Ed Asner is taken into custody on Dec 13 after refusing to move from an entrance of the downtown federal building. Asner along with Martin Sheen and 50 others were arrested during a demonstration protesting US aid to El Salvador. Right: Sheen (second right)



turns to Father Kennedy as they lock arms to block the entrance of the building. Sixty-five Austrian MP's sent an urgent appeal to US Congress Wednesday to stop Washington's military and other aid to the regime in El Salvador.

Ray Johnson, 69, was found dead Tuesday on a road near a ranch where the mixed-breed dogs lived. Johnson frequently walked eight miles (nearly 13 kms) from his house to another ranch where he tended hogs and cattle. (AP)

USS Iowa blast finding 'ridiculous': Sailor Kendall Truitt accused the US Navy on Wednesday of a cover-up in its investigation of the USS Iowa gunnery explosion and labelled "ridiculous" its conclusion that his friend deliberately blew up the gun, himself and 46 shipmates.

Truitt told a House of Representatives subcommittee hearing into last April's disaster aboard the battleship — and the navy's controversial investigation of the explosion — that Truitt's friend, Clayton Hartwig, was not suicidal as investigators have suggested, could not have put a detonator in the gun's charge without being seen and was incapable of making a detonator. (Reuter)

Europe

Man squirts acid at women: Police hunted in busy underground train stations in central London on Thursday for a man who has squirted acid on at least 16 women passengers.

In a string of assaults this week, women have been burned around their upper thighs or buttocks and at least one victim needed a skin graft.

The attacker is believed to be a man in his early 20s and police said he apparently uses hydrochloric acid. Angela Bianci, 22, who was sprayed at Hyde Park corner station, said the acid had eaten through her jeans and sweater before she realised what had happened. (Reuter)

Turks sue British doctors: Four Turks who say they sold their kidneys for cash said on Thursday they were suing the British doctors who carried out the operations. The doctors, who were paid £10,000 each, are being sued by the four Turks who say they were misled into press civil lawsuits against physician Raymond Crockett, transplant surgeon Michael Bewick and urologist Michael Joyce, who deny charges of professional misconduct.

Two of the four Turks have said they sold kidneys to raise money to support their children, while another says one of his kidneys was "stolen" during an operation.

The inquiry was also told on Thursday that the Turkish embassy in London paid around £500,000 (\$800,000) to a London medical centre for treatment of Turkish kidney patients over a six-month period last year. (Reuter)

UK flu kills pregnant woman: More people are dying in the flu epidemic in the UK that has forced health chiefs to fly in extra vaccine from Europe, it was reported Friday.

A six-month pregnant lady died in bed at her home in West Yorkshire, northern England, after catching the flu.

And a number of other reported deaths have occurred in the UK as the outbreak was still spreading.

Half of London's hospitals are on red alert because of sickness among nursing staff, and the number of flu-related admission is still increasing. (Kuna)

Shakespeare's globe get protection: The remains of William Shakespeare's globe theatre were granted state protection on Wednesday, safeguarding them from any disturbance.

David Trippier, heritage minister at the Department of the Environment, said the remains of the south bank of the Thames river near Southwark bridge had been designated an ancient monument.

The discovery of three chalk and brick foundation walls, part of the back of the historic globe, was announced Oct 12 by the British conglomerate Hanson Plc, which owns the site, and the museum of London.

The globe saw the first performances of Shakespeare's great tragedies, "Hamlet," "Othello," "King Lear" and "Macbeth." (AP)

Investigators fail to identify monster: Italian investigators probing the murders of eight couples in the past 20 years said on Thursday they had failed to identify the so-called "monster of Florence" and had dropped proceedings against five suspects.

"There is no evidence worth of the name to enable us to send anyone to trial... the end of the formal inquiry leaves us all feeling bitter," Mario Rotella, the investigating magistrate in charge of the inquiry, told a news conference.

The murders were carried out with a Beretta 22 pistol in the hills around Florence. The first took place in 1968 when an Italian married woman and her lover were shot dead in their car at midnight near a lonely cemetery. (Reuter)

Dinosaurs

Fossil solves the mystery

WASHINGTON, Dec 15, (Reuter): New fossil finds suggest that the reptilian ancestors of modern mammals roamed the entire Earth some 225 million years ago, the National Geographic Society said yesterday.

These very advanced mammal-like reptiles appear to have roamed all over the globe, "Hans-Dieter Sues, a Smithsonian Institution paleobiologist, told Reuters.

The society based its conclusion on a newly discovered collection of fossils uncovered at a wooded site near Richmond, Virginia.

The most interesting find so far has been 11 jawbones from the closest known reptilian ancestors of mammals, a tiny dinosaur known as the cynodont.

Discovery of the fossilised remains solves a longstanding mystery because previous cynodont finds have been confined principally to the southern hemisphere, including sites in South America, China and South Africa.

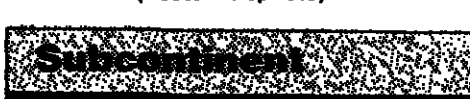
When the cynodont lived 225 million years ago, Earth had only one continent, known as Pangaea, but scientists have never been able to determine why there was no evidence the cynodont had wandered into areas now found in the northern hemisphere.

The Virginia site has also yielded the fossilised remains of some 200 different pre-historic creatures, including lizards and at least one previously known heavily armoured species with big bony backplates and large rigid spines.



Gomez indicted

Former Bolivian interior minister Luis Arce Gomez awaits his turn to board a prison bus Dec 12 in Miami. Gomez appeared before a US magistrate on duty charges, six years after his indictment for conspiracy to import cocaine into Florida. (Reuter wirephoto)



Bangladesh journalists on strike: About 2,000 journalists across Bangladesh went on strike Wednesday to protest a government ban on a daily newspaper that supported anti-government strikes, the journalists' union said.

The ban on the Bengali-language Dainik Millat, which has a circulation of 10,000, was imposed Tuesday.

The 16-hour strike by members of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists will affect 25 daily newspapers and three news agencies, including one owned by the government, said the union's president, Rezauddin Ahmed.

There will be no newspaper tomorrow (Thursday), said Ahmed. He said the strike began at 4 pm (1000 GMT).

In a statement, the union demanded that the ban be lifted to ensure the freedom of press.

The Interior Ministry, which announced the ban, said the newspaper's report on the latest anti-government strike on Nov 30 was prejudicial.

Asia

Chun apology called for: Radical students occupied two opposition party buildings Thursday calling for punishment of former president Chun Doo-hwan and an open apology by the United States for the Korean military's bloody suppression of a civil uprising in 1980.

Shouting "down with (President) Roh Tae-Woo," about 80 students occupied headquarters of two main opposition parties, the Party for Peace and Democracy and the Reunification Democratic Party.

The students demanded that Chun and his associates be punished after fully accounting for corruption and power abuses that occurred during

The MP's, more than one-third of the total in the first parliamentary chamber, spoke of atrocities by the El Salvador regime. They demanded "quick and determined action" to end the present bloodshed. (Reuter wirephoto)

the former president's seven years in office, ending in early 1988. (AP)

Koreans pray on college exam day: Hundreds of thousands of high school students took college entrance exams Friday while their families crowded temples and churches to pray for passing marks in a ritual that symbolises South Korea's drive for success.

At Seoul's Dongguk University, some parents who had driven to the school before dawn slept in tents. Hundreds kept vigil outside the main gates clustered in small groups, warming themselves by fires and drinking coffee and eating instant noodles sold by vendors.

Some knelt on cardboard boxes to pray. Others stood for hours grasping at the metal bars of the college gates. (AP)

Darker night for next year: South Korea's night life will be darker next year as theatres, beer halls, restaurants, cabarets and discos were ordered Friday to close before midnight.

Health Ministry officials said the move, which the Ministry of Internal Affairs is issuing tough regulations intended to limit night spot business.

All night spots except those at tourist hotels, bus terminals and railway stations must shut down by midnight starting in January. (AP)

Victory talks a "miscalculation": The leading newspaper in communist North Korea said that talk of a victory for capitalism, based on recent events in Eastern Europe, is a miscalculation. "It is the main trend of our age that capitalism perishes and socialism emerges victorious," said the Korean Workers Party newspaper Rodong Shinmun.

Parts of its commentary were broadcast by Pyongyang's Korean Central News Agency, monitored in Tokyo. (AP)

Loatian king died of old age: Laotian Prime Minister Kaysone Phomvihane said on Thursday that his country's former king, whose fall was widely expected, died of old age.

King Bhumibol Rajabongkorn, who reigned for 48 years, died of a heart ailment at the age of 82. He was the first prime minister of the communist country had spoken out about him.

Africa

Namibia independent in March: After 75 years of South African rule, Namibia will probably gain independence in March, the top UN official involved in the territory's transition to freedom said on Thursday.

Political parties in Namibia are making swift progress in drafting a constitution for the new nation, said Marti Ahtisaari, the secretary-general's special representative for the territory.

Ahtisaari has been supervising Namibia's moves toward independence as head of the UN Transition Assistance Group (Untag) since April. Untag's mission is due to expire at the end of March. (AP)

Vranitzky pleased: Chancellor Franz Vranitzky has said in a message to "Swapo" leader in Namibia Sam Nujoma he is pleased with the recent election victory of the "South West African People's Organisation".

To Nujoma, the probable first president of the new independent state, Vranitzky said "Swapo" had the confidence of the great majority of the Namibian people.

The chancellor said his own Austrian "Socialist Party" was confident that "Swapo" would "lead Namibia in the spirit of democratic principles, and in democratic agreement with those who were also elected to the constitution-giving assembly, as an independent and sovereign country at the side of the five nations of Africa."

In the same message, "Socialist Party" foreign affairs spokesman Peter Jankowitsch said his party would spare no effort to build up relations based on trust between Austria and Namibia. (Kuna)

Mozambique denies: The Mozambican government has denied claims by Renamo guerrillas that African presidents, attempting to mediate in the country's civil war, favour direct negotiations without preconditions. The state-run news agency Aim reported on Thursday.

A government source said claims made by Renamo chief Afonso Dhlakama that Kenyan President Daniel Arap Moi and Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe favoured direct negotiations between the government and the right-wing rebels were false, Aim reported.

Latin America

Synonymous no more: During 60 years in power, the institutional revolutionary party's logo — PRI — has been synonymous with the Mexican government. But no more, says President Carlos Salinas de Gortari.

The PRI "is no longer the government party, but a party in the government," President Carlos Salinas de Gortari told party leaders.

The party still controls virtually every level of government, but the president insisted things have changed. He said "the difference is not only semantic, but also a basic one." (AP)

Haiti arrests ex-sergeant: A former army sergeant twice accused of plotting to overthrow the military government of President Prosper Avril was arrested after spending weeks in hiding, the Haitian Ministry of Information reported.

In a communiqué read over state-run television, the government said Patrick Beauchard was being held by military forces in the capital, but offered no other details.

The government last November named Beauchard as ringleader in an alleged plot to kill General Avril. It said the plot included at least eight former officers and three leaders of an opposition political coalition. (Reuter)

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Nato to open skies to East bloc flights

BRUSSELS, Dec 15, (AP): Nato foreign ministers today set out a common position for opening up their skies to overflights by Warsaw Pact nations as part of efforts to further reduce East-West military tensions.

The ministers wound up two days of talks at the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation by issuing their strategy for the so-called open skies plan, proposed last spring by US President George Bush.

They also welcomed an unprecedented visit next week by Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze to alliance headquarters.

Nato Secretary-General Manfred Woerner told reporters he was looking forward to the meeting with Shevardnadze on Tuesday.

He said he expected they would discuss "matters of common interest."

Britain's Foreign Secretary, Douglas Hurd, described the visit as "a symbol of what's been happening" in East-West relations.

No time has been set for the meeting, which Nato officials said was initiated by the Soviet Union. Shevardnadze will be in Brussels on Monday and Tuesday to sign a new trade and economic co-operation agreement with the 12-nation European Economic Community.

Shevardnadze's trip will be the first by a Soviet foreign minister to Nato headquarters, one more in a series of unprecedented events that have taken place in the past several months in East-West relations.

Plans for his visit overshadowed the opening day of Nato talks during which US Secretary of State James Baker outlined plans for shaping a wider political role for the alliance in an era of reduced tensions.

In their final statement, the ministers welcomed the political and economic reforms under way in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe and said "the progress achieved must be consolidated."

"Many problems remain," they said. "The rule of law and democratic government through free elections have yet to be fully institutionalised."

They also issued a word of caution about the Soviet Union's military might.

"We cannot ignore the military realities that our alliance continues to face and which lie at the heart of Europe's security problems," the officials said.

They gave their backing to the eventual reunification of East and West Germany, but through peaceful and democratic means. The language was identical to that included in a statement issued over the week-

end by leaders of the EEC at a summit in Strasbourg, France.

They reiterated the importance of Nato as an "indispensable foundation of stability, security and co-operation for the future of Europe."

There was no alternative, they said, to the alliance's strategy of deterrence to prevent war, based on a mix of conventional and nuclear weapons.

Moreover, they said the alliance must press for political change and work for a Europe that is no longer divided in its post-war halves.

On open skies, the ministers said the con-

cept "has a very special value."

"The willingness of a country to be overflown is, in itself, a highly significant political act in that it demonstrates its availability to openness," it said. "Aerial inspection also represents a particularly effective means of verification."

It also noted that aerial overflights serve as an effective means of verifying whether a country is abiding by arms control agreements.

The Nato position will be presented to eastern negotiators at a conference in February in Ottawa, Canada.

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Global ban on chems likely

GENEVA, Dec 15, (UPI): A world-wide ban on chemical weapons is "highly possible" within one to two years. US disarmament negotiator Max Friedersdorf said yesterday.

At the conclusion of the latest round of bilateral talks with the Soviet Union, Friedersdorf said the two major powers now "are fairly close on most stages."

"I believe a chemical weapons convention, particularly with the emphasis President Bush has put on it, is highly possible within the next year or two," he said.

Another reason for recent progress, Friedersdorf said, was the "horrible fact of the use of chemical weapons on an extensive scale in the Iran-Iraq war."

The latest round lasted 16 days and Friedersdorf said the two sides agreed that before the end of this year they would exchange data on their respective stockpiles of chemical weapons.

Negotiators will then resume in February both within and parallel to the 40-nation Geneva disarmament conference which has had a chemical weapons ban on its agenda for the last 15 years.

Friedersdorf himself is leaving his post as US ambassador to the disarmament conference and is being succeeded by Stephen Ledogar, previously American delegate to the conventional arms talks in Vienna.

Problem

As always, Friedersdorf said in comments in the daily bulletin of the US diplomatic mission in Geneva, the main problem to be resolved on chemical weapons is that of verification of compliance.

"There is near universal acceptance of challenge inspection," he said, although "some people still have a problem with it because of the intrusiveness involved."

Boosting chances of an early convention, however, was President Bush's recent proposal that the two major powers cut their chemical arms stockpiles by 80 per cent prior to a treaty, Friedersdorf said.

Friedersdorf said Gorbachev at Malta gave the proposals "a favourable reaction without a commitment" while "indicating" interest in agreement on the 80 per cent cuts in time for the Washington summit next June.

Draft

In Vienna, the Warsaw Pact presented a draft treaty for reducing conventional forces in Europe (CFE) yesterday, beating Nato's version by a few hours.

In Brussels, Nato foreign ministers said they had agreed on their draft treaty and it would be tabled in Vienna later in the day.

Nato wants a CFE treaty signed by the end of next year. The 16 Western allies had planned to present their draft a month ago but were bogged down by a row between Greece and Turkey.

The row over whether to include the Turkish port of Mersin in the area for arms cuts was set aside so that the draft treaty could be tabled on behalf of all the Nato allies.

The seven-member Warsaw Pact agreed to present its draft treaty only a few days ago.

"We thought that if we made a first step it would encourage the other side to move," Polish chief delegate Wlodzimierz Konarski told Reuters.

Nato's counter-proposal does not mention overall numbers for the two alliances, but suggests limiting US and Soviet troops stationed on foreign soil to 275,000 men each.

The ceiling of 275,000 troops for each superpower was first mooted by Bush last May. US officials said then that it would involve a cut of 30,000 men by the United States and 325,000 by the Soviet Union.

Limits

The Warsaw Pact draft suggests a 300,000 limit for these forces. It also wants battle tanks to be limited to 20,000 on each side, artillery pieces to 24,000 and combat aircraft to 4,700.

The army and air force will lose about 25,000 troops this fiscal year as a result of cuts mandated by the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings budget law, the Pentagon's spokesman said.

Noting that there are 2.1 million people in the US armed services, spokesman Pete Williams said the cut "is certainly significant to the services but it's not an enormous bite."

In another development, Pentagon sources said Defence Secretary Dick Cheney has decided to stick with plans for producing five B-2 Stealth bombers next fiscal year, but has put off deciding whether the entire contingent of 132 planes will be built.

Soviets slash 1990 military spending

Bid to free funds to help modernise economy

MOSCOW, Dec 15, (Reuters): The Soviet Union said today it would slash military spending by more than eight per cent next year as it shifts the armed forces from an offensive to a more defensive role.

Colonel General Nikolai Chervov told a news conference the budget would be cut by 8.2 per cent to 70.98 billion roubles (\$11.4 billion).

"The new political thinking in defence doctrines allowed the military to reduce the budget in practical terms," said Chervov, head of a department of the general staff.

It was the first time that the complete armed forces budget had been given to foreign journalists ahead of publication in the official Soviet press.

Military spending this year amounted to 77.3 billion roubles \$12.9 billion, according to the first fully-disclosed figures for defence expenditure, released in June.

Chervov also gave the most detailed breakdown to date of the armed forces saying that as from January their strength will be 3,993,000.

The armed forces will be equipped with 4,045 missile launchers of all kinds, 10,000 missile warheads, 63,900 tanks, 8,207 combat aircraft and 157 major surface ships.

Czechs are in a hurry

PRAGUE, Dec 15, (AP): Czechoslovakia's opposition and communist leaders, racing against a constitutional deadline, were preparing for more sticky negotiations on selecting a new president.

Selecting someone to fill the vacant, symbolically important post has become a contentious issue in Czechoslovakia's transition from a hard-line communist country.

At a news conference last night, opposition spokesman Lubek Dobrovsky said roundtable negotiations would resume soon, although he did not say when.

He added that those negotiating for the opposition Civic Forum, Communist Party, students and other political parties were exhausted after intense discussions that lasted until late Wednesday and had decided to take a night off.

The talks Wednesday night at first seemed to have produced agreement on how a new president would be named to replace hard-line communist leader Gustav Husak, who resigned last Sunday.

Under the constitution, Czechoslovakia's federal assembly has two weeks from the resignation to elect a new head of state and avoid a constitutional crisis.

The opposition, riding on a tidal wave of popularity for leading the pro-democracy revolution, wants Parliament to elect activist playwright Václav Havel.

Czechoslovakia will dismantle its Iron Curtain border with West Germany, shorten military service and end Communist Party influence over the army, its new defence minister said today.

Lieutenant General Miroslav Vacek told a news conference his ministry would recommend that barriers at the West German border be removed because they were no longer a military necessity.

Six people including top state security officers have been indicted for violently suppressing a pro-democracy rally that sparked mass political upheaval in Czechoslovakia, a parliamentary commission said yesterday.

In a separate development, a chief state prosecutor investigating possible charges against civilians, including top politicians, resigned.



A student waves a Bulgarian flag during a demonstration at Alexander Nevski memorial church in Sofia. (Reuters wirephoto)

Sofia bows

One-party rule to end

SOFIA, Dec 15, (Reuters): Bulgaria's communist leadership pledged today to end the party's monopoly on power within a month and agreed to begin round-table talks with the opposition next week.

Leading activist Konstantin Trenchev said Prime Minister Georgi Atanasov and Politburo member Andrei Lukanov met at lunch with opposition leaders including philosopher Zhelju Zhelev, head of the Union of Democratic Forces opposition umbrella group.

Trenchev, leader of the unofficial Union Podkrepa (support), told Reuters the two sides agreed to begin talks next week. He could not give an exact date.

Meanwhile, in the evening thousands of people took to the streets of Sofia for the second day running. But the crowd, which had intended to join a pro-democracy rally outside parliament, split into groups around the city centre.

Some 2,000 jeering demonstrators marched to state television headquarters to protest that coverage of a rally outside parliament yesterday had

presented the crowd as extremists.

"We are not extremists, we are the people," they shouted.

They dispersed after television spokesman Filip Bokov promised to broadcast coverage of their protest and to comment on it personally later in the evening.

Parliament, shaken by a mass show of public impatience as it met last night, passed a declaration promising to scrap the communist party's constitutional right to rule at its next session in January.

"Parliament ... values this as an important step on the way to solidifying political pluralism and the development of a democratic state," the unanimous declaration said.

The declaration, made early this morning, was aimed at heading off a repetition of protests the previous evening, when some 40,000 jeering Bulgarians thronged outside parliament to demand the immediate repeal of the constitutional clause enshrining the party's leading role.

Chervov said offensive weapons were being reduced, operational training was being revised and that most major military manoeuvres had been cut.

Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev has begun cutting the armed forces in an attempt to lessen international tension and free much-needed funds to help modernise the outdated Soviet economy.

"We were guided by (Gorbachev's) policy of openness. The (budget) cuts are one way of building confidence," Chervov said.

A year ago Gorbachev told the United Nations that 500,000 troops would be cut from the Soviet armed forces. Chervov said 256,000 of these had already left.

This year's 1989 US defence figure was \$300 billion, but the Soviet Union says the low wages paid to Soviet conscripts — around seven roubles (\$12) a month — partly explain the large discrepancy in military spending between the superpowers.

Colonel General Vladimir Babev, who also attended the news conference, said the budget figures did not include the cost of converting military factories to producing civilian goods, an important part of Gorbachev's economic reform programme.

"The budget should make it possible for the state to maintain reasonable military sufficiency and also improve living conditions for the army," Chervov said.

An unofficial army protest group was formed last month to protest against poor living conditions, long hours and low wages. There have also been protests over lack of housing for retired officers and their families.

Babev said the army was now building more houses for officers on pensions.

The Soviet Congress reconvenes today with a faction of reformist deputies expected to decide whether to declare themselves a formal opposition, a possible step toward formation of an alternate party.

The inter-regional deputies group, which consists of about 400 of the Congress' 2,250 members, has thus far carefully refrained from such a formal break with the Communist Party.

GDR to disband party's militia

EAST BERLIN, Dec 15, (AP): The East German government said today it will disband the Communist Party's militia, further eroding the party's already weakened grip on power.

In addition, the government has established its first contacts with the International Monetary Fund, as the communist nation breaks with the isolation of the past.

The announcement that the militia would be disbanded came a day after the government abolished the hated secret police, often used by previous communist governments to suppress any signs of dissent.

Pro-democracy groups had demanded the breakup of both the militia and the secret police, as the country moves closer to a democratic society after free elections next May.

In a brief dispatch today, the official East Germany news agency ADN said communist Premier Hans Modrow's government had agreed on an "end to the work of the militia."

Modrow's 28-member cabinet includes 11 non-communists.

ADN said the disbanding of the Communist Party's militia would be completed by the end of June 1990.

According to Western estimates, the militia numbers 3,000 active members, but that 400,000 could be called up on short notice.

Once armed with anti-aircraft guns, automatic weapons, armoured personnel carriers and rocket-propelled grenades, the militia acted as the Communist Party's own army.

Meanwhile, West German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher, in an interview published today, said that "closer ties between the two German states contribute to stability in Europe."

East Germans will have a chance to decide between a socialist or free-market system in elections planned next spring, and "we will respect" their decision, Genscher told the East Berlin newspaper Der Morgen.

"We remain a single nation," the West German foreign minister said. He envisaged the two German states growing together within a general process of overcoming the postwar division of Europe and a "demilitarisation of East-West relations."

On Thursday, the East Berlin leadership welcomed wide-ranging economic co-operation with West Germany, and earlier this week expressed interest in closer ties with the United States.

With the communist leadership crumbling since Oct 18 and pro-democracy movements taking hold, East Germany is making increasing attempts to open further to the outside world.

Late Thursday, the official news agency ADN said that East German envoy Peter Dietze had met with Helmut B. Jansz, the IMF's special representative for trade matters.

ADN called yesterday's session in Geneva the first contacts between the two sides. It said Dietze had expressed interest in the "economic, monetary, political and financial experience" of the IMF.

ADN did not say whether East Germany plans to seek a membership in the international organisation.

EEC nations support reunification of Germans: poll

BRUSSELS, Belgium, Dec 15, (AP): A recent opinion poll, taken in all 12 European Economic Community nations and published yesterday, has found overwhelming support for a reunification of the two Germanys across the EEC.

Seventy-eight per cent of EEC nationals favour reunification and 12 per cent oppose it, according to a Eurobarometer poll whose results were released by the EEC executive commission.

The poll found 78 per cent of West Germans favour reunification.

But West German enthusiasm for reunification

drops sharply if it is at the expense of West German membership in the Nato alliance and the EEC, the survey found.

It found reunification is backed by 80 per cent of the French and the Italians, 81 per cent of the Irish, 83 per cent of the Greeks and Portuguese, and 84 per cent of the Spanish.

Elsewhere in the EEC support for reunification was as follows: Denmark, 39 per cent; Luxembourg, 63 per cent; Belgium and Great Britain, both 71 per cent, and the Netherlands 76 per cent, the poll found.

The survey questioned 1,000 people in all 12 EEC states between Oct 16 and Nov 22 on a range of issues affecting the EEC.

The question about reunification was added to the survey around Nov 9, the day East Germany opened its borders to halt the flow of thousands of East Germans fleeing to the West via Czechoslovakia.

The survey questioned West Germans about reunification in light of their membership in Nato and the EEC.

Recruit trial continues

Ezoe denies bribery

TOKYO, Dec 15, (AP): Hiromasa Ezoe, whose company is at the centre of a scandal that brought down a government and tarnished the Japanese establishment, denied today that he had bribed politicians and public officials.

Also denying bribery charges today were Toshiro Ono, an executive of Recruit Co., the information conglomerate. Ezoe founded, and two politicians, Takao Fujinami, a former cabinet minister, and Katsuya Ikeda of the opposition Komito (clean government) party.

If convicted, the defendants could be sentenced to five years in prison.

Their trial is the last of five, which began Nov 22 in Tokyo district court and will last for months as the legal system delves into allegations of corruption in the cozy relations between Japanese government

and business.

The Recruit scandal began in the summer of 1988 and brought down Prime Minister Noboru Takeshita, who resigned last spring after acknowledging he received large donations from the company.

Other key figures in the governing Liberal Democratic Party have been sidelined by the scandal and the honesty of ranking bureaucrats has been questioned because of gifts they accepted from Recruit.

Ezoe, 53, told judge Tadatsugu Watanabe he accepted the prosecution's allegations that he provided gifts and bargain-priced shares of stock to influential figures. But he said they weren't intended as bribes.

Like the other three defendants, Ezoe accused prosecutors of mistreating him.



Hiromasa Ezoe

Takao Fujinami

Action Line

I AM 23 years old, I finished my studies in Kuwait; I also completed my computer science in Kuwait. I'm now working as a cashier in a company. Can I make my istimara (learner's driving licence)?

DEEPAK KAPOOR
LEARNER'S driving licences are issued only to some category of workers like doctors, engineers, university lecturers, judges, legal consultants and experts. An istimara is also issued to Arab students at Kuwait University, provided they have a Kuwaiti birth certificate, and can provide documentary evidence of studying there.

At the moment, istimaras are being issued only to a limited number of people. You can approach the traffic department and apply for one. If you are lucky, you might get it.

I AM Pakistani. I've been working at a ministry in Kuwait since 1976. I called my wife in 1977, and she stayed with me until 1984. During this period, my four children were born in Kuwait. Due to some circumstances, she left in 1984 although her residence permit was valid until 1987. She has not returned to Kuwait.

Can I get a visa for her on the basis of her old residence permit? If possible, could you please refer to any rules regarding the matter?
C.M. Ishaque

UNDER the present immigration rules, a family visa can be obtained if a person draws a salary of KD 450 in the public sector. If you fall in this category, you can make a fresh application.

To our knowledge, there are no rules regarding issuance of family visas based on previous documents. It would be advisable to approach the Immigration Department and ask them if they would consider issuing family visas, based on documentary evidence that the children were born in Kuwait.

We live in Khaitan. Before the creation of the Farwaniya governorate we came under the Hawalli governorate. Please let us know if we are placed in the Farwaniya governorate or are still in Hawalli for the purpose of completing such formalities like car registration.
N.M. Dohadwala

FOR the time being, Farwaniya residents need to process their papers at the Hawalli traffic department. This will continue until separate facilities are set up in Farwaniya in due course. The authorities will make an announcement after opening the facilities in Farwaniya.

I WAS pleased to find the overseas charges for telephone calls printed in the Action Line (AT, Dec 9). I am sure this will be helpful to many of the readers for easy reference.

Would it be possible to print the detailed international codes of all the countries. I hope you consider my request.
Shamool Alihussein

ALTHOUGH we would like to comply with your request, it's not possible to do so due to reason of space. It would be advisable to obtain the yellow pages, issued by the Ministry of Communications. The directory gives all international dialling codes, countrywise and citywise. The director also contains telephone numbers of embassies, airlines, hotels and other businesses. The 1990 edition would be out by February. This is a useful reference book, particularly for an office. It costs KD 2 per copy and is available from any telephone exchange.

If you have a problem, we will try to solve it the best way we can. Drop in a line to Action Line, Arab Times, P.O. Box 2270, 13023 or fax your questions to us on No. 4847495.

GCC will adhere to Arab League charter: report

Summit commences Dec 18 in Muscat

RIYADH, Dec 15, (Kuna): On the occasion of the next Gulf Co-operation Council's 10th Summit, scheduled to be held in Oman on December 18, the Information Affairs Department of the GCC's Secretariat General issued the first part of a report on political affairs.

The report, said that the foreign policy of the GCC at the regional level includes, adherence to good neighbourliness, non-interference in others' affairs, development of friendship and co-operation with other countries and consecrating security and stability in the Gulf through achieving peace and stability in the Middle East.

The foreign policy also includes defending the security of the region, confronting foreign countries' attempts to interfere in the region, keeping the Gulf away from international conflicts and

banning the entry of nuclear weapons to the area.

Regarding the GCC's foreign policy at the Arab level, it includes complete adherence to the Arab League Charter and the belief in the importance of Arab solidarity, realising peace in the Middle East which cannot be achieved without the pullout of Israel from all occupied Arab territories and attaining a comprehensive and just settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

These principles also include the affirmation that the Palestine Liberation Organisation is the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

Policy

At the international level the GCC foreign policy includes firm adherence to the United Nations Charter, respect to

the sovereignty and independence of countries and non-interference in their internal affairs, adherence to the Non-Aligned policy belief in the importance of Islamic solidarity and combat of racism and racial discrimination.

The GCC countries also works to achieve Arab solidarity through various means including: participating in solving problems and differences between Arab countries, contributing in achieving economic development projects in Arab states of low income through giving aid and soft loans, supporting the Arab steadfastness to confront Israel, and support any kind of Arab gatherings within the framework of the Arab League.

The Arab Gulf body also works to achieve Islamic solidarity through the following methods: help to solve problems and differences of Islamic and

friendly countries, participate in achieving economic development programmes in Islamic countries with limited income. The GCC also seeks to develop the Non-Aligned Movement through boosting co-operation among its members and solving their differences.

The six-member Gulf body also works to develop the UN through continued and increasing financial contributions in the budgets of its specialised agencies.

The regional issues which were the concern of the GCC since its establishment in 1981 was the Iraq-Iran conflict, the Palestinian cause and the Lebanese situation.

Regarding Arab reconciliations, the GCC exerted efforts to ease the tension caused by the Sahara conflict between Morocco and the Polisario, they stood by

Lebanon in its ordeal, and supported the Palestinian Intifada.

The GCC members made efforts to mend fences between Algeria and the Arab Maghrob states, and also solved the problem between Tunisia and Libya.

The GCC states tried to bring closer points of view between Damascus and Baghdad, and also between Sanaa and Aden during the border problem between the two Yemenis.

Regarding the GCC's stance toward relations between East and West, the GCC states expressed several times through their foreign ministers on several occasions their satisfaction over the detente between the two superpowers particularly in the field of international disarmament and solving regional conflicts.

3.2 million students in GCC schools

RIYADH, Dec 15, (Kuna): Gulf Co-operation Council schoolers, both in private and public schools, amounted to 3.2 million students who predominantly preferred government schools, figures released by the GCC indicated.

Only ten per cent of the total number of schoolers, excluding university students, went to private schools in the 1986-87 academic year, said the report which is published by the General Secretariat of the GCC.

The number of females attending schools increased during the same year by 9 per cent while the number of male students recorded an increase of 6 per cent, according to the released figures.

The highest recorded rate was in the Sultanate of Oman (11 per cent) and the lowest was in Kuwait (only 1 per cent).

The figures also indicated that a growth of 9 per cent was registered for students attending higher education programmes

(131,000 students) with number of males slightly higher than that of the females.

The report, published on the occasion of the tenth GCC Summit which will be held in Muscat Monday, also included figures on GCC development in areas of post, electricity, health care and other matters.

Growth

Telephone lines, the figures showed, grew by 6 per cent to reach 1.72 million lines in 1987,

the most recent year figures could be counted.

The number of post office centres has marginally increased (one per cent) to stand at 826 centres, but the figures did not provide details on distribution rates to each GCC state.

Increases in produced electricity and water have also been registered, an indication to the attention given by the government to the needs of the people and efforts to provide remote areas with modern services.

Aid appeal

KUWAIT, Dec 15, (KUNA): The Kuwaiti Society for Disabled has appealed to philanthropists to assist the society in catering for the humanitarian needs of the disabled.

In a statement to Kuna, the society's secretary-general Murtadha Al Mutawa urged benevolents to take part in a fund-raising campaign to be organised next month to finance a new KD 900,000 Disabled Centre in Jahra Governorate.

Ropme bans import of toxic waste

KUWAIT, Dec 15, (Kuna): The first technical and legal meeting on transfer of hazardous waste between member countries of the Regional Organisation for the Protection of Marine Environment (Ropme) and other states had approved additional articles on the draft protocol in this sphere.

Ropme's general co-ordinator for Environmental and administrative affairs Dr Badria Al Awadi said, after returning here from Sharjah where she participated in the meeting on Dec 10-12, that the conferees approved the basic principle of completely banning the import of dangerous refuse into the Gulf.

She said that such a step would protect the region from the illegitimate trade in those materials and added that the meeting, attended by 34 experts from the seven member countries, also affirmed those countries' commitment to return the dangerous refuse to the countries of origin.

The experts decided to meet again next year to make a final review of the legal articles and technical supplements, Awadi said, adding that the conferees assigned Ropme's general secretariat with preparing a special protocol on transfer of hazardous materials among the member countries and to prepare a list of those materials within six months after signing the protocol.

Unified Gulf passport may be issued soon

RIYADH, Dec 15, (Kuna): A comprehensive report on achievements of the GCC member states in the field of security and military co-operation among its six member countries, which has been issued by the GCC General Secretariat has said that the GCC member states have paid tangible interest in fostering military co-operation to protect their countries' sovereignty, independence and resources.

At its first session, the supreme council affirmed that "the security and stability of the region is the responsibility of its people and states" and the GCC asserts their rights to defend their security and independence.

GCC defence ministers adopted "the Defensive Policy Document" that was endorsed by the foreign ministers. GCC Chiefs of Staff held several meetings and brought into being "The Peninsula Shield Force" as a symbol of solidarity and self-defence.

In its 8th session the GCC supreme council approved the comprehensive security strategy for GCC member countries with the purpose of effective co-operation and integration in this sphere.

Interior ministers of the GCC states agreed on issuance of unified driving licences for GCC citizens who can also use their own driving licence in other GCC states.

Work is currently underway to put into effect a decision by GCC states to issue unified Gulf passport for GCC citizens, and to standardise passport conditions and types.

A study on forgery has been prepared and disseminated among member countries for comments as it is scheduled to be re-examined by GCC criminal investigation officials.

A draft law on combating narcotics has been prepared by GCC General Secretariat and will be referred to the concerned authorities for endorsement.

EVENTS



Swissair in Wataniya Towers

SWISSAIR officially inaugurated their new offices located in the Wataniya Towers on Fahed Al Salem street. The ribbon was cut by Ali Morad Behbehani in the presence of dignitaries from the diplomatic corps, the business community and the travel industry.

R. Beat Weiland, manager Kuwait was at the same time able to introduce Rudolf Mueller, Route Manager for the Middle East.

In the realm of the economic development, Swissair is happy to offer their services in these new and modern surroundings.



Kuwait Sheraton Hotel & Lufthansa piano concert

KUWAIT Sheraton Hotel and Lufthansa German Airlines recently played host to a large gathering of German and English school children at a piano concert presented by the famous pianist Jerzy Romanuk, who presented the works of Chopin, Beethoven and other famous pianist. After the event the children were invited to a light buffet and an enjoyable time was had by all.

NIGHT CHEMIST

Kuwait	Othman St.	Makkah St.
Al Mutawa	Salmiya & Rumithiya	Jubeel Al Shiyoukh
Helali St.	Phoenicia	Al Nemran
Al Omar	Salem Al Mubarak St.	Opp. the school
Mubarak Al Kabir St.	Fahad St.	Jahra
Hawali & Nagra	Al Eiman	Al Abraj
Al Sabah		Dubai Al Khuzaa St.

TELEVISION PROGRAMMES			
KTV-1	KTV-2	KTV-3	KTV-4
MORNING PERIOD 9.30 The Opening and Holy Quran 9.40 Sabah Al Kher News and Variety 9.55 Cartoon Serial (repetition) 10.15 Magazine D'Actualite 10.30 Watadour Al Dawaar: Arabic serial (Part I), starring: Mustafa Fehmi, Iman Al Tonkhi, and Hamdi Hafez 12.00 From My Kitchen: Local programme 12.30 News Summary 12.35 Holy Quran and Closesdown EVENING PERIOD 4.00 The Opening and Holy Quran 4.15 The World Today via	5.15 The Young Artist: Local children programme 5.45 Night Chemists, Airlines and official Advertisements 6.00 Al Bahr La Yabta Al Shams: Arabic serial, starring: Jeyana Eid, Ahmad Al Zeben, Subhi Eit 6.45 Noor Al Islam: Religious programme 7.25 A special programme on Bahrain, on the occasion of its National Day 8.00 Security and Citizens: Local programme, prepared by the Ministry of Interior Public Relations Office 8.30 Good Evening and Local News 9.00 News in Arabic 9.45 Al Manzel Al Khafi:	10.35 Youm Lilah: Arabic programme, starring: Afaf Shuaib, Tayseer Fehmi, Ahmad Budair and Ihsan Al Qalawi 11.45 News Summary 11.50 The World Today via satellite 12.15 Holy Quran and Closesdown KTV2 6.00 Opening Announcement & Holy Quran 6.10 Hello Kitty: A cartoon series for children 6.30 Wolf: Eric's father notices that his son is interested about dogs and starts wondering why? 7.00 The Survival Factor "Venom": Animals	9.30 The Infinite Voyage "Fires of the Mind": Treks through the mysteries of human thought. Riveting special effects present breakthrough discoveries in the development of the brain, the footprints of memory. 10.30 Late night film, China Rose. Starring George Scott, Ali Morag. An American arrives in China searching for his son who disappeared many years ago. A young beautiful Chinese woman - helps him find traces which may lead to his son. 12.00 News in Brief 12.15 Magazine D'Actualite 12.30 Closesdown

BBC world service highlights

Women on the move

In many countries of the world women are getting a worse deal than men. Despite many governments' commitment to equality large numbers of women find themselves with the double burden of being out at work and still being expected to run a home and family. For this four-part series Mary Hockaday travelled to four different countries with very different social and political structures and in the first programme she visits Yugoslavia and discovers more of the situation of women there.

Friday, December 22 at 10.30 and 15.15.
On frequencies: 17.64 MHz/17.01m; 15.07 MHz/19.91m; 11.76 MHz/25.51m

The psychology of the masses

Individuals who make up a crowd do not always behave as they would if they were alone. To an outsider a crowd can appear no more than a mindless mob but to the people who are part of it the outside world hardly seems to exist. This programme delves into the crowd mind and among the contributors are people who, at some moment in their lives, lost themselves in a crowd.

Sunday, December 17 at 19.15, Monday, December 18 at 10.30 and 16.30.
On frequencies: 17.64 MHz/17.01m; 15.07 MHz/19.91m; 11.76 MHz/25.51m

In praise of bees

For a long time the hive has been compared both favourably and unfavourably with human society but are bees, in their ordered, hierarchical existences, to be envied or pitied? Christopher Nicholson talks to apiarists and tries to establish what in an increasingly overcrowded world can man learn from the honey-bee.

Sunday, Dec 17 at 17.01, Monday, Dec 18 at 09.30 and 13.01.
On frequencies: 17.64MHz/17.01m; 15.07MHz/19.91m; 11.76MHz/25.51m

Off the shelf: The wind in the willows

Follow the adventure of Mole and Rat and their friends on the River Bank as Alan Bennett reads Kenneth Grahame's classic book in ten daily parts, Monday to Friday.

Monday, Dec 18 at 07.30 & 17.30.
On frequencies: 17.64 MHz/17.01m; 15.07MHz/19.91m; 11.76 MHz/25.51m.

CINEMA		Came a hot Friday	
Al Andalus	Licence to Kill	Arabic film	
Nowhere to nice	Al Firdos	Salahibhat	
Salmiyah	Main Azzad Hoon	Arabic film	
Hall booked	Fahad St.	Jeeb	
Al Hamra	Puthiya Karukkal	Pooram	
Main Azzad Hoon	Al Jahra	Ahmedi Drive-In	
Drive-In		Caddy Shack II	

ARTS

Art exhibition

A SOLO art exhibition of Bangladeshi artist Rantu Acharjee will be opened on Dec 16, at 9.00 am at the Bangladesh embassy auditorium. The exhibition will continue till Dec 21.

SOCIAL

Study in Britain

ARE you interested in studying AUTOMOBILE or AERONAUTICAL ENGINEERING in Britain?

If you are then come and visit the British Council Education Office on 16 & 17 December, for information and advice about the many different courses that are available.

KOSA meeting

KOSA Annual General Meeting - 17 December 7.30 pm Shaab Marina. All members should attend to elect the 1990 committee. For further details please call the KOSA Secretary Declan Mannion on 2452880.

Vishal Musical Group

VISHAL Musical Group is conducting their 2nd musical programme on Friday, January 5 at 6.00 pm at Funitees Indian Arts Circle. The programme contains the most popular old and new hit songs from Hindi films. Also classical and fast dances by young talented artists. Centres for distribution of passes will be announced shortly.

Musical evening

"UPSAANA" one of the leading musical groups is conducting their 6th musical programme on Friday, December 22 at 5.30 pm at Funitees. The programme contains most of the latest hit songs from Hindi, Tamil and Malayalam. For entry passes please contact Tel. 3987249/3986956/398739-6/5643643/ 5638762/4315374/ 4314018.

Kuwait Nomads R.F.C

THE Kuwait Nomads Annual Xmas Dinner will be held on Thursday, December 21 at 7.30 pm. For more information contact: S. Hill on 5391720, R. Houston on 5658435 or G. Adams on 5644533.

Kuwait Cultural Centre

NEW courses at the cultural centre: yoga healing classes, two sessions in the evenings on Tuesdays and Thursdays; jujitsu (martial arts), Saturday and Mondays, pm; Chinese cooking classes, Saturdays, 9-11 am. For details call 5624393, Kuwaiti Welfare Society.

A CHRISTMAS party will be held on December 28, 1989 at 8 pm. For details ring 3721383 or 3713467.

Konkani Drama

THE New Goans Overseas Association are pleased to announce Mendon De Bandra's "Samsarant Astana Diat" a Konkani play which will be held in the Indian Arts Circle (Funitees) on the 16th of February 1990. The cast all from Goa includes M. Boyer, C. D'Silva, Betty Naz, Junior Rod, Rosario Dias. Plans open in early January.

Southerners

DEC 22: Southerners invite their members and guests to celebrate Xmas family get-together at the Ramada Al Salam Hotel (the new Al Mirage Ballroom) on the excellent music by Top Ranks and Mr. Leo's Magic Show. Santa Clause will be distributing gifts to all kids and other attractive gifts to prize winners. Fun and entertainment for entire family starting from 10am on December 22, 1989. For passes contact Ligory on 2425705 or 2412444.

Pongal celebrations

BHARATHI Kalai Mandram is organising Pongal Celebrations on 29th December in the Indian Arts Circle auditorium with a variety of entertainments for children and adults from 5 to 8.30 pm. All are welcome. For details and entry passes please contact 3716976, 3718953, 5631230 or 5627718.

Victory Day flag hoisting. A flag-hoisting ceremony will be held on Dec 16, Saturday at 9:00 am to observe the Victory Day of Bangladesh. The ceremony will be held at the Bangladesh Embassy premises: House No. 3, Block I, Street 14, Khaldiya. All Bangladeshis are requested to attend.

PRAYERS

Fajr	5.11 am
Zohr	11.43
Asr	2.33 pm
Maghreb	4.52
Isha	6.14

Teachers' status discussed at symposium

Private companies clean 176 schools

THE sufferings of teachers in their respective professions was the topic of a symposium organised by the Cultural Activity and Research Committee at Kuwait Teachers Society.

One of the speakers said that this problem in Kuwait is two-dimensional. The first is represented in the official opinion which has failed to detect that the shortcomings in the teaching profession is a vital issue and is growing to take on dangerous proportions. The second view held by officials who still believe that teachers are being pampered with high allowances, salaries and other advantages represented in the form of shorter working

hours, extra holidays and other perks. The symposium called for taking early cognisance of the realities of the issues.

Participants at the symposium included Mohammed Al Msailem, from the Education College at Kuwait University, Abdul Razzaq Al Mlaifi, headmaster of Bayan Secondary School and the symposium supervisor, Dr Mohammed Farah from the Fundamental Education College.

Services
Meanwhile Jaffar Hamza Al Salman, director of Public Services at Kuwait's Ministry of Education said that every effort is being made to provide the best services aimed at developing the education

process in the country.

He said that presently there were about 1,265 employees at the Education Ministry who have been provided with government accommodation. However, about 521 such employees had expressed a desire to leave such accommodation.

A total of 50 schools had been handed over to private companies to undertake cleaning services this year, Salman said. With this addition to the previous contracts awarded in the related field, the number of schools covered by this system awarded in the related field, the number of schools covered by this system amounted to 176 schools in addition to 185 centres.

The official said that ministry officials were holding periodical meetings with the catering companies to ensure that meals provided to kindergarten children and scholarship students were nutritious and of the highest standards.

The ministry pays special attention to "landscaping and greening process along with gardens" of schools.

A total of 68 schools have been provided with an electronic telephone switchboard which does need the services of an operator, with another 29 schools selected to be provided with these services. The ministry intends to provide this system to all the government schools, Salman said.

Shuaiba Industrial Area comprehensive: Zamel

Authority celebrates silver jubilee

AT the present time when Shuaiba Area Authority is celebrating its silver jubilee, a local daily conducted interviews with officials at factories and companies located in Shuaiba Industrial Area to highlight problems, work-related activities, on-going activities, facilities, on-going development and in general to ascertain the operational scenario of the area.

Shuaiba Industrial Area is located 50 kilometres south of Kuwait City on the coastal line between Ahmadi Port and Mina Abdullah Port. The area is ideal for industries due to its location close to energy sources and to the main transportation road linking Kuwait City with Nwaiseeb and the Safar express road. Its natural location on the coast also gives it a unique feature represented in utilising sea water for industrial cooling.

Its twenty three million square metres attached to the Shuaiba Area Authority are divided into two sections, the eastern and western sections which were linked to the authority in 1977.

The area includes 35 factories owned by 29 companies and establishments. The Shuaiba Area Authority is a government establishment having independent characteristics and falls within the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry since its establishment in 1964. The authority aims at preparing and developing a model industrial area for different industries particularly oil, petrochemicals and other oil related industries.

The authority provides the area with required industrial services and facilities in order to develop the industrial base in the country in addition to practicing an effective role in the national economy and taking part in social development.

Projects
Relating to services and facilities presented by the Shuaiba Area Authority, the acting director of the authority, Abdul Kareem Al Zamel said that the department prepares industrial plots for projects in the area for both permanent and temporary applications. This is conducted in accordance with the size of services required by a specific industry and its relation

with other existing industries. He said that all projects are studied with respect to their technical and economical feasibility in co-ordination with the Industrial Development Committee at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

The authority also provides factories with sea water which is used for cooling and fire-fighting purposes, Zamel said and pointed out that sea water is provided to factories through two pumping stations located in the southern and northern parts of the area.

He added that the authority has established a road network to facilitate vehicles and trucks transportation inside the area, in addition to establishing a sewage network for rain water and water resulted from the operation of factories.

Regarding pollution resulting from existing industries, Zamel stressed that the authority as a government establishment is held responsible for censoring and fighting pollution and preserving the environment in the area. He said that a social centre was established to combat atmospheric and water pollution since 1968. It now bears the title of Environment Protection Centre. The authority with co-operation of government ministries and establishments in addition to area companies has taken scientific steps in indicating standards for pollution in the area. Several anti-pollution treatment projects were also established aimed at minimising the effects inflicted by pollution.

Pollution

Zamel added that the authority has established a new Environment Protection Centre which consists of seven main laboratories and four branches. All laboratories are equipped with modern scientific instruments and tools. He indicated that in addition, the authority had also established automatic censoring networks for the detection of water and atmospheric pollution which have been distributed inside the area limit.

The authority presents many other services for factories such as electricity, gas, fresh water and telecommunication and postal services.

He stressed that industry in Kuwait should be taken seriously to achieve economical development through benefiting from natural resources.

On the other hand, the managing director of Kuwait Company for Engineering and Maintenance of Refineries, Ghanem Al Dabous stressed that Shuaiba Area Authority is playing a comprehensive role in the area and extends technical and other related assistance to manufacturers and industry in general.

He added that it is important to encourage industrial investment in the country particularly in the oil sector. Regarding establishment of a free industrial area, he said that he totally supports the idea adding that in order to support this initiative, current port capacities should be upgraded and new ports should be established particularly since the ceasefire in the Iraq-Iran war in the Gulf.

Costs

The deputy chairman of the Gulf Company for Glass, Saud Al Zaid stated that it is hard to detect any problems in the area. He added that most Shuaiba area factories were established during the economical boom of the country leading to higher cost in establishing them. He said that because of that, profits are highly affected by market stagnation. He praised the level of services presented by the Shuaiba Area Authority but recommended enhanced measures towards preserving the cleanliness of roads.

The manager of Shuaiba Petroleum Refinery, Riyadh Ibrahim Al Saleh stressed the importance of the role played by Shuaiba Area Authority. He said that the authority plays an effective role in developing and organising the area. He proposed the transfer of non-oil industries which exist in the area presently because they are not subject to the same security measures.

He called for undertaking studies to recommend incentives to attract and qualify Kuwaiti youth to work in the field of industry. He indicated that some refineries at the area have over 50 per cent Kuwaiti staff.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Royal rescue

KUWAIT, Dec 15, (Kuna): HH the Crown Prince and Premier Sheikh Saad Al Abdullah Al Sabah Tuesday tended a man who was injured in a car accident at the Sixth Ring road, a local daily said Thursday.

It added in a front-page exclusive that HH Sheikh Saad who was unescorted at the time rushed the injured man to Farwaniya Hospital and made sure that he received the proper treatment.

It indicated "this humanitarian gesture by HH was highly regarded by the hospital's staff and re-emphasised HH's belief that every citizen, no matter what his position, is a servant of the people."

Not free

KUWAIT, Dec 16, (Kuna): Many officials at the Ministry of Communications yesterday dismissed the telecommunication services as the Ministry based on Communications and Telecommunications Centres provided free of charge between Kuwait and a number of Arab and friendly countries.

The source stressed that dispatch service is subjected to the tariff and each paper to be sent abroad costs between KD 1.250 and KD 3 but reception service for the public is offered free of charge.

The bureau fax section receives all messages and documents sent by fax and disseminates them to concerned individuals or institutions inside Kuwait without charge, said the source who urged facsimile users to write their addresses clearly and accurately on the papers.

Coloured paper is not preferred to be used for fax service and fullsize or A-4 size paper is the most appropriate type for such service, he said noting that fax service at the centre begins at 7.00 am and ends at midnight.

Achievements

KUWAIT, Dec 15, (Kuna): The Secretary-General of the Supreme Council of Education Dr Ibrahim Al Khalifi said the recent council's meeting discussed a number of reports aimed at developing educational strategies in the country.

A report on students' achievements in the public education and the quality of educational system was discussed at the meeting so that the council acquaints itself with the output of the secondary stage.

Another report on preparation of teachers' training before and after service was also discussed at the meeting with special emphasis on the Kuwaiti educational realities and national needs.

Council members also reviewed means of developing secondary education in Kuwait and adoption of various types of secondary education, Dr Khalifi said.

Archaeologist

KUWAIT, Dec 15, (Kuna): Information Undersecretary Abdul Aziz Jassaf yesterday met with the director of the French excavation expedition Dr Jan Francois Sal.

Sal acquainted Jassaf with discoveries made recently by the French team in the Qusur area in Failaka island which unearthed a church built in the 6th century. Jassaf requested photographs and preservation of the site of discovery.

The meeting was attended by assistant director-general of the Information Ministry's Archaeology and Museums Department Dr Fahd Al Wehebi.



Teacher training at PAAET

A regional workshop about new formulas in qualifying and training vocational teachers was opened in Kuwait last week. On its fifth day, director of vocational development centre at the Public Authority for Higher Education, Dr Ahmad Buzub delivered a lecture on the use of computer as an educational means to modernise vocational training. Picture shows Dr Buzub delivering his lecture.

MPW completes Kuwait sewage masterplan: Houti

Completion of the entire project is expected to encompass eight stages. The first stage has been completed and covered 12 areas in Kuwait and the second stage is now being prepared. These projects have been the result of serious and in-depth (several) studies conducted by the ministry, Houti said.

Additionally, Houti pointed out that many grand projects are planned to be executed during the 1990s — like the University's Project and Sibbiya Causeway. Projects that will be carried out for Kuwait University are aimed at expanding and developing the buildings of different faculties in Shuwaikh, Khaldiya, Kairan, Jahriya and Udaiya areas.

These projects will include buildings for faculty of engineering, faculty of administrative studies, medical sciences centre, building of administration and library, developing the buildings of faculty of arts and a multi-purpose building. The ministry will also carry out several car parking lots for students of the university, Houti said.

The minister pointed out that Sibbiya Causeway will link Kuwait City with Sibbiya City and will also complete roads projects that lead to Murgab area. Additional projects on the way to be implemented are the new premises of the telecommunications centre with the tower, Dihiyat Mishref Centre, building of the General Customs Authority, the institute of musical and theatrical studies as well as Central Safat Post Office, Houti said.

Saudis behead drug smuggler

RIYADH, Dec 15, (AP): A Pakistani drug trafficker was beheaded in Riyadh today after he was convicted by an Islamic court, the Interior Ministry announced.

The man, Khan Bad Shah Akhtar, was found guilty of smuggling a large quantity of heroin into the kingdom, the announcement said.

He was the fifth Pakistani in two months to be beheaded for the same crime.

Beheading is a punishment for murderers under the Islamic Sharia or religious law by which Saudi Arabia rules. Thieves have their hands chopped off and adulterers are stoned.

In recent years, Islamic theologians prescribed beheading also for those convicted of "spreading corruption on the face of the earth," under which they placed drug smuggling and peddling.

Higher education draft law comes under fire

THE draft law on higher education ignores the classification of teachers at the university which is dangerous to teachers and also violates the constitution of Kuwait because payments are issued according to laws as indicated in the constitution. But, the draft law of the ministry says that payments are determined according to charters and not the law. The draft law also ignores the participation of students and employees of the university and authority in the different councils, a Faculty of Law official at Kuwait University said.

Speaking at a seminar organised by the Union of Kuwait Students, Dr Anwar Al Fizi said that the draft law of higher education had not formulated any novel or important proposals. Basically, he said: "It is a traditional law."

He said that Kuwait University is comprised of ten faculties. However, he commented that these are all unrelated. Each faculty has a special set of pre-conditions for granting admission to students and selecting its professional teaching staff. These faculties can be divided into separate universities — like the university for medical sciences and another for social sciences.

Also speaking at the seminar, Dr Mussad Al Haroun, undersecretary of the Ministry of Higher Education said that Dr Ali Al Shamlan, minister of higher education had set-up a special committee to develop the law of Kuwait University that was issued in 1966.

Studying the law issued in 1966 is now imperative as in its present frame, it is no longer adequate to cope with developments in the higher education field. However, he disclosed that the law will not be rushed as it is intended to be framed taking into consideration long-range benefits.

Salah Al Mtairi said that most South Firdous plot owners complained that loans extended by the Credit and Savings Bank is not enough to cover construction of houses. Salah said he spent KD10,000 in addition to the loan he received from the bank to finally complete building his new house.

In the past the bank gave loan receivers a two-year period

before he began to pay the first monthly payment. At the present time, the bank gives a period of only three months from the date of granting the loan to receive the first loan installment.

Mohammed Daghash said that he had already completed building his house but, has yet to receive power supply. He raised several complaints to the National Housing Authority and the Ministry of Electricity

and Water, without receiving any redress.

Sultan Al Mtairi said that South Firdous area has only one entrance which creates many traffic problems and jams. He added that Kuwait Municipality shows no co-operation in removing construction wastes. Further, due to a lack of security patrols several thefts and acts of vandalism occurred, he said.

Independent anti-drug commission to be set up

THE Social Service Committee at the Supreme Planning Council held fifteen meetings during the second session of the council, discussed a number of topical issues and endorsed a series of decisions, according to an official source.

The issues discussed included the feasibility of setting up an independent commission to combat drugs and intoxicants in Kuwait, which would also undertake to analyse the underlying factors leading to the escalation of this problem. The commission will also propose the best possible measures to combat this problem.

The Secretariat General has been entrusted with the role of taking the necessary measures to perform the study and a technical committee was formed with members from the ministries of Interior, Justice, Public Health and Finance, which had so far held a number of meetings to discuss the duties assigned to it regarding the establishment of an independent commission for this purpose.

The committee invited a number of senior government officials to attend its meetings and participate in the discussions which dealt comprehensively with ways to deal with the problem and submit recommendations for this purpose.

The committee discussed the need to enhance the role played by mosques in social reform and step up its active contribution to the efforts exerted on a nationwide scale to fight the disintegrating effects of the problem on the social set-up.

It also tackled the analytical results of the social studies conducted in this respect to learn of the social background and existing family problems that contributed to the rise and escalation of the problem, and ways to support research on how to counteract these effects.

Sabotage at Khairan resort

KUWAIT, Dec 15, (Kuna): Residents cars at the Khairan resort were sabotaged by unknown individuals overnight which greatly dismayed those who came to enjoy a relaxed weekend.

The incident, which took place shortly before dawn today, was relayed to the securitymen for conducting necessary investigations, the resort general manager Adnan Zine Al Deen told Kuna over the telephone this morning.

He said that tyres of 15 cars were slashed and no longer usable and added that the one kilometre resort has parking areas for 2000 cars for its 200 chalets.

He noted that the incident was the first of its kind since the resort was opened.

South Firdous residents bemoan lack of services

SOME citizens who received their residential plots in South Firdous complained of lack of co-operation from both the National Housing Authority and the Ministry of Electricity and Water. They said that they have long ago completed constructing their houses but, have not yet received any services. Specifically, they said six months have passed without power connections to their new houses.

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Iraq completes Shatt bypass

BAGHDAD, Dec 15, (Reuters): Iraq announced it has dredged to a depth of 14 metres (46 feet) the Shatt Al Basra, a ship canal which bypasses the Shatt Al Arab on its disputed border with Iran.

The Shatt Al Arab is Iraq's main outlet to the sea and one of the roots of the 1980-88 Gulf war.

The 80-km (50-mile) Shatt Al Basra follows a shorter path from the town of Basra to the Gulf port of Umm Qasr, which is 50 km (30 miles) west of the Iranian border.

The official Iraqi News Agency said the

Basra canal has now been widened to 98 metres (300 feet) and deepened six metres (18 feet) to a depth of 14 metres.

A state-owned company shifted four million cubic metres (yards) of mud to enlarge the canal, it said.

INA said that in addition to its strategic importance dredging of the Shatt Al Basra would reduce floods in the marshes of southern Iraq, where the Tigris and Euphrates, the two great rivers of Mesopotamia, flow to the Gulf through the Shatt Al Arab.

Iraq has torn up a 1975 treaty under

which it shared the Shatt Al Arab with Iran.

In stalled post-war talks, Baghdad has insisted it must have full ownership of the border waterway and that clearing it of debris should be the first step towards a lasting peace.

Iran yesterday rejected Iraqi demands that their border be redrawn as the price of peace.

The Iranian news agency Irna quoted Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati as saying there was no alternative to UN

Security Council Resolution 598 calling for the withdrawal of forces behind internationally-recognised frontiers.

"Iraq... should accept present common borders between the two countries and the water border in the Arvand river (Shatt Al Arab)... within the framework of the 1975 accord," the agency quoted Velayati as saying.

Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz on Wednesday repeated Baghdad's repudiation of the 1975 treaty which divides the border river between Iran and Iraq.

Aoun's men out of army payroll

BEIRUT, Dec 15, (AP): President Elias Hrawi's government warned today it will stop paying troops loyal to rebellious Christian leader Gen. Michel Aoun in an apparent bid to weaken his grip on the Christian heartland.

A government statement said army payrolls would be handled by Gen. Emil Lahoud, who was appointed army commander to replace Aoun last month.

The statement said the Defence Ministry gave the five brigade commanders serving in the Christian enclave five days to submit monthly payrolls to Lahoud. Otherwise, the salaries will not be paid by the Central Bank.

There was no immediate reaction from Aoun to the decision, which threatens to deprive some 20,000 mainly Christian soldiers of their salaries during the holiday season.

The Central Bank, located in Muslim West Beirut, is under Hrawi's authority.

Hrawi government under Sunni Muslim Prime Minister Salim Hoss has instructed concerned authorities to transform the military airfield at Riak, in Bekaa Valley, and the northern airbase of Kefay into civil aviation facilities.

Officials at Middle East Airlines, Lebanon's national carrier, said engineering crews have been dispatched to examine both facilities.

Beirut international airport, which has been often closed by civil war fighting, had been the country's only air travel utility.

The decree made no mention of an airfield in the township of Halat, in the Christian enclave, which Christian militias had been seeking to open to civilian traffic.

But Christian sources, speaking on condition of anonymity, said efforts were under way to legalise Halat as a civil airport, too.

Most of the estimated 1 million Christians living in the Christian enclave travel by sea to the east Mediterranean island of Cyprus for onward connections.

The State Department has said that the Lebanese ambassador to the United States had resigned.

"The government of Lebanon informed us... that ambassador (Abdallah) Boubabib had resigned his post, effective Dec 11," the department said in a written statement.

Baghdad has strike missile

We have to defend ourselves: Aziz

UNITED NATIONS, Dec 15, (Reuters): Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz has said a rocket capable of placing a satellite into orbit that his country recently launched was intended for peaceful purposes while another missile also tested was a military deterrent.

"We don't believe that the first missile has anything to do with... the conflict in the region, because it is a peaceful achievement," he told a press conference.

This rocket, called Al Asid (warship), was a scientific achievement and made for peaceful purposes, he said.

The second missile, which he said was a "surface-to-air" rocket called Tammuz, was a

2,000-km (1,250-mile) range, had a military purpose.

"We have to take into consideration for our defence purposes that our country is still being threatened by Iran. We are in a situation of no war and no peace," Aziz said.

"So we have to do whatever we can to provide the necessary defensive means to defend our country if the other side thinks once again of the renewal of hostilities."

Iran and Iraq have observed a ceasefire since August 1988 in their eight-year-long Gulf war but have not yet concluded a definitive peace.

Both Aziz and Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati are in New York for separate talks

with Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar on prospects for reviving the peace process.

Asked by a reporter for an Israeli newspaper whether the Iraqi surface-to-surface missile was also seen as a deterrent against other Middle East states, such as Israel, Aziz replied: "If any country in the region or outside the region attacks Iraq, then Iraq will have the right to defend itself against the aggressor."

Iraq announced last week that it had launched an 80-foot (25-metre), 48-ton rocket into space from the Al Anbar space centre west of Baghdad.

US officials expressed concern over the development in light of the proliferation of missile technology in the Middle East.

PLOID from next week

ABUDHABI, Dec 15, (AP): The Palestinian diplomatic mission here will start issuing identity cards next week as a step towards establishing a Palestinian nationality, the mission head said yesterday.

Khaled Malak, recognised as ambassador of Palestine by the United Arab Emirates, said holders of the card would be able to obtain Palestinian nationality and a passport at a later stage.

"Issuing Palestinian identity cards is a comprehensively studied step, and will not affect the privileges of Palestinians holding other nationalities and passports," Malak told a news conference. He said the cards will be issued starting Monday.

There are roughly 70,000 Palestinians in the United Arab Emirates, part of an estimated 800,000 in the oil-rich Gulf region, where they form part of its large expatriate community.

Kuwait has the largest group of some 300,000 and the identity card procedures are scheduled to start there on Saturday. In Qatar, some 2,000 have already applied.

The majority of some 5 million Palestinians in exile carry passports or travel documents from Jordan, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Tunisia and South Yemen, and are treated as nationals of those countries.

Of these, 1.7 million are in the Israeli-held West Bank and Gaza Strip, the territories generally designated as forming the would-be Palestinian state proclaimed by the Palestine Liberation Organisation in November 1988.

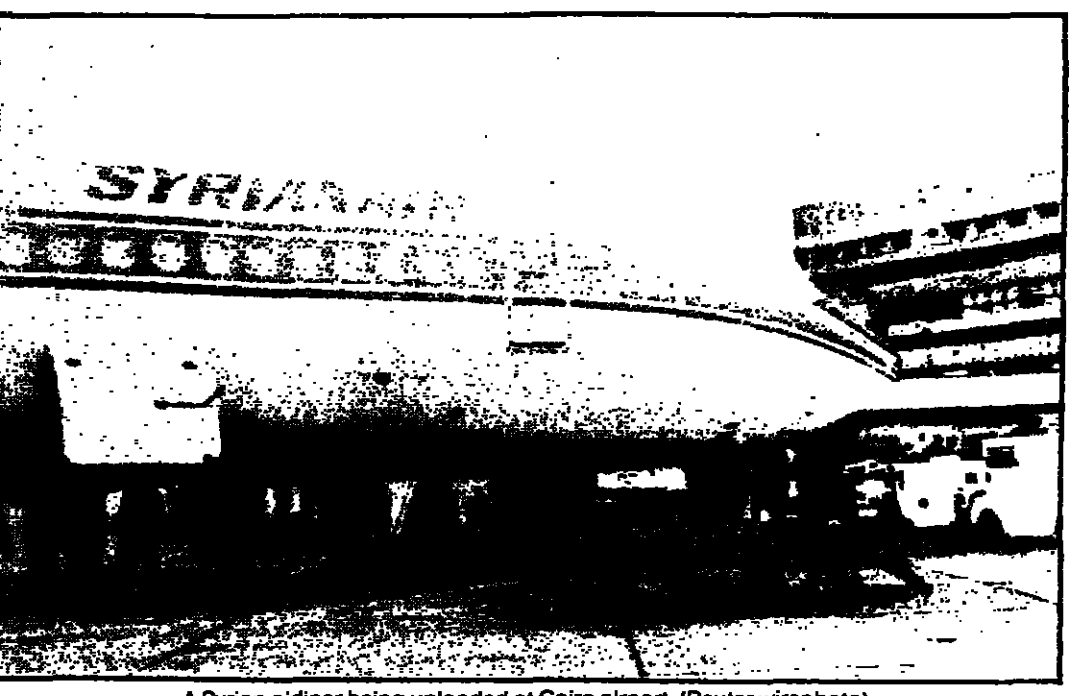
Since then the missions of the Palestine Liberation Organisation have been turned into embassies in the countries that recognised the new state.

Malak played down reports that some Arab states would withdraw citizenship privileges from those who obtained the Palestinian identity card.

"The step of issuing the identity card is mainly aimed at the construction of our independent state," he said.

It would also serve for a census on the number of Palestinians in the world, Malak added.

■ US ambassador Robert Pelletreau Jr. has met twice in the past 72 hours with the PLO's permanent representative in Tunis, Hakeem Badawi, the Palestinian news agency Wafa reported.



A Syrian airliner being unloaded at Cairo airport. (Reuters wirephoto)

Egypt-Syria ties soon

Contacts on for Mubarak-Assad summit

ABU DHABI, Dec 15, (Kuna): Diplomatic relations between Syria and Egypt will be restored during the coming two weeks, press reports here said yesterday.

"Al Itihad" daily quoted diplomatic sources in Damascus that the announcement of restoring the diplomatic relations depends on the expected meeting between Syrian President Hafez Assad and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.

Egypt's Foreign Minister Dr Esmat Abdel Meguid will arrive in Damascus during next week carrying a message from President Mubarak to President Assad and to discuss with Syrian officials the necessary arrangements for a summit meeting between the two leaders, the paper quoted the sources as saying.

They also noted that Libyan leader Moammar Khaddafi might join the summit meeting.

The paper quoted Libyan sources as saying that one of the objectives of President Mubarak's visit to Libya was to arrange for a meeting between Mubarak and Assad.

They added that the restoration of air lines between

Cairo and Damascus was the fruit of Libyan mediatory efforts.

The sources predicted that a Libyan envoy will arrive in Damascus soon to brief the Syrian officials on the Egyptian-Libyan summit, held last Tuesday in Libya.

The paper also quoted political sources in Cairo as saying that a high ranking Libyan military official will visit Cairo shortly to discuss military co-operation between the two countries.

They indicated that President Mubarak and Libyan leader Moammar Khaddafi had agreed to support joint military industries.

Meanwhile, a Syrian plane landed at Cairo airport on Wednesday night for the first time in ten years following a decision by the two countries to resume commercial air links.

The plane arrived with a delegation headed by Syrian Minister of Transportation Munir Taymour, Deputy Director General of the Syrian Airliner Nabil Rifat and a media delegation.

Snags in Aden-US talks

No accord after four meetings

KUWAIT, Dec 15, (AP): South Yemeni Foreign Minister Abdul Aziz Al Dali said his country's talks with the United States for resumption of diplomatic ties have hit snags, a newspaper reported yesterday.

In an interview published in a Kuwaiti daily newspaper, Dali said as a result of Kuwait's mediation, representatives of the two countries at the United Nations held four meetings this year.

"But no agreement has been reached and no date was set for the next meeting," he added.

Dali's statements contradicted those attributed to South Yemeni President Heider Al Attas, who told the Al Itihad newspaper of Abu Dhabi that talks on resuming relations with the United States after a 20-year break were "positive" and would

yield good results.

Washington's latest public word on the issue was in October, when it also did not specify the date for future meetings. The focus of US concern reportedly has been Aden's alleged links with terrorist figures, which Aden denies, and the need to see the Marxist state improve its ties with neighbouring countries, a process which has been taking place.

Talk on the resumption of ties developed as South Yemen, the Arab world's only self-styled Marxist state, began opening up to the West in line with the policies of Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev. Kuwait and other countries on the Arabian peninsula have been fostering a rapprochement with Aden.

Dali recalled that Aden

severed diplomatic relations with the United States in 1969, two years after it gained independence from Britain, "when the then-American Charge d'Affaires encouraged opposition elements to stage a coup against the regime."

Dali said other snags in the talks on the resumption of ties with Washington were over the ownership of US embassy facilities in Aden, and the necessity of guarantees to American oil companies operating in South Yemen.

He was alluding to Hunt Oil Co. and Exxon Corp. in a consortium that also groups Soviet, French and Kuwaiti companies that were selected to prospect for oil in a border area that the two Yemens have decided to exploit.

Arabs feel threatened by Israel

TEL AVIV, Dec 15, (Reuters): An Israeli nuclear expert said that Arab states fear increasingly that Israel will use ballistic missiles to launch chemical, biological and nuclear attacks.

At a conference on arms control in the Middle East that produced more pessimism than optimism, Shai Feldman of Tel Aviv University said Israel must understand that Arab countries feel threatened by the Jewish state.

"Most Arab states regard Israel as possessing a biological and chemical as well as nuclear capability," Feldman said in answer to other speakers who expressed fear of Arab states.

These concerns were heightened by foreign news reports that Israel has developed a "Jericho-II" missile that could reach Arab capitals in minutes, he said.

"For the Arabs, this comprises the most salient technological manifestation of Israel's long reach," said Feldman, an expert in nuclear strategy at the university's Jaffee centre for strategic studies.

Israel bars publication of information about missile or non-conventional weapons development, although there have been foreign reports of Israeli missile testing and the Jewish state is widely believed to have nuclear and chemical weapons.

Egypt, Libya defuse tension

Agreement reached

CAIRO, Dec 15, (AP): Egypt and Libya have agreed to build roads connecting oases, share television programmes and co-operate in agricultural and industrial projects, major relaxations in tensions between the long-fending neighbours.

Broad agreement was reached on most of the projects in October at summit meetings between Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and Libyan leader Moammar Khaddafi. Egypt's government-owned news media reported on Wednesday that the two leaders reaffirmed the decisions on Tuesday during Mubarak's one-day visit to Sirte on Libya's north coast.

The only document they reportedly signed was one for Egypt to supply technical expertise for Libyan industry.

News reports said they also agreed that Libya would join in an Arab-European dialogue scheduled for Paris on Dec 21-22 and would co-ordinate with Egypt its positions on it.

Journalists who accompanied the Egyptian leader to Sirte, Khaddafi said he discussed the issue

with Mubarak who tried to persuade him to take part in the proposed dialogue. The text of the interview was published in the early editions of yesterday's Cairo newspapers.

"The issue is still under discussion," Khaddafi said, citing a Libyan view that says the dialogue would not be among equals "because we are facing an industrial power which will be united by 1992 according to a strategic programme while there is no Arab strategic plan, up until now, for economic and political co-operation."

French President Mitterrand called for the meeting, at which the foreign ministers of the 22 Arab League members and the 12 member states of the European Economic Community are to focus on Arab problems.

As reported by the government-owned Middle East news agency, other co-operative projects include Egyptian help for desert reclamation projects in southeastern Libya and construction of an 80-mile-long (125 km) road connecting Sirte oases in Egypt's western desert with the Jaghub oasis in eastern Libya.

MIDEAST

Turkey asked to shorten Euphrates cut: Iraq said on Thursday it had asked its northern neighbour Turkey to reduce the period during which a new dam will cut the flow of the mighty Euphrates river.

"We have asked Turkey to reduce the original period of one month to close the Euphrates and its officials promised to study the issue," deputy Foreign Minister Nizar Hamdoun said. (Reuters)

Eight people die in house collapse: Eight people were killed and 15 were injured on Thursday when a house collapsed in the Egyptian town of Hawamla, Egypt's Middle East News Agency (MENA) reported. (Reuters)

Bank scandal: Italian Treasury Minister Guido Carli said on Thursday that Iraq paid for some shipments of arms and strategic materials with loans from Italy's Banca Nazionale del Lavoro.

The minister also told the Senate Finance Committee that directors in Rome were aware of and involved in the extension of \$2.8 billion in irregular loans to Iraq by the bank's branch in Atlanta, Georgia. (AP)

Flash floods drown 27: Local authorities estimate flash floods have caused deaths worth 250 million dirhams (\$30 million) in desert areas of southeastern Morocco, the Rabat daily Al Alam reported on Friday. (Reuters)

300,000 to face starvation: Around 300,000 southern Sudanese will face starvation because renewed fighting between government and rebel troops as suspended relief operation in the region, a Western relief official said on Thursday. (AP)

Ait Ahmed returns: Algerian revolutionary hero Hocine Ait Ahmed returned home on Friday from 23 years in exile to a rapturous welcome from thousands of supporters. (Reuters)

No progress made at Gulf talks: Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz said on Wednesday that no progress was made in separate talks that he and his Iranian counterpart held this week with the UN Secretary General and he was returning home. (Reuters)

Mujahideen ready to include Iran-based men: The head of the Afghan rebel leadership in Pakistan said on Thursday they were ready to broaden the base of their government-in-exile by including Iran-based groups. (Reuters)

Unification of Yemens: North Yemeni Foreign Minister Abdel Karim El Bryant said that North Yemen and Marxist-oriented South Yemen would become one unified state in less than one year from now. (UPI)

US wants Jibril out

WASHINGTON, Dec 15, (AP): The United States is adding pressure in an effort to persuade Syria to kick out the man believed responsible for the bombing of Pan Am Flight 103, a State Department source said yesterday.

"It's a matter of degree, of frequency and of language," the source, who spoke only on condition of anonymity, said about increased diplomatic contacts with Syria.

The official said the increased pressure did not include direct threats, but that there had been a measured turning up of the pressure in the most recent contacts, some of which have come through US Ambassador Edward Djerjian.

Threats, the source said, would be counter-productive. The source also said that US relations with Syria already are cool, leaving the United States little with which to bargain.

State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said the United States is unhappy with Syria's refusal to eject Ahmed Jibril, believed to have engineered the Pan Am attack a year ago.

The headquarters of Jibril's organisation, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command, are in Damascus, and he has at least one training camp outside Damascus.

"This is a major item on our bilateral agenda with Syria," Boucher said in response to a question yesterday at the daily State Department briefing. "To date we're not satisfied with the Syrian government's responses, and we think the Syrian government can do more."

Bombers face death penalty

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM, Dec 15, (AP): The Israeli military court in the occupied West Bank has convicted three Palestinians of a petrol bomb attack on an Israeli bus and could impose the death penalty when it passes sentence next week.

Lieutenant Colonel Yosef Shapira on Wednesday convicted Ahmed Tekrouni, Jumar Adan and Mahmoud Abu Harish of murdering Rachel Weiss, her three infant children and soldier David Delarosa in the attack in the West Bank town of Jericho in October 1988.

Meanwhile, Bethlehem cancelled non-religious Christmas celebrations for the third year because of the Palestinian uprising.

Bethlehem Deputy Mayor Hanna Nasser said the municipality in the Israeli-occupied West Bank decided against official celebrations on account of the "sad situation that is prevailing."

Iranian polls seen as test for Rafsanjani

NICOSIA, Dec 15, (Reuters): Braving rain and cold, Iranians voted today in by-elections seen as the first major test of President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani's reform policies.

Tehran radio said voting proceeded smoothly in Tehran and five other cities where people queued at polling stations early in the morning despite rain and cold.

Spiritual leader Ayatollah Khamenei and Rafsanjani cast their ballots in Tehran, where 38 candidates are standing for four seats, the radio said. Another 26 candidates are contesting five provincial seats.

Sixty-four candidates, many of them hardline opponents of Rafsanjani and his so-called pragmatist policies, are contesting the nine seats, four in Tehran and five in other cities.

Ira said that in Tehran alone, 2,500 polling booths were set up for the elections in addition to 260 mobile stations for those unable to commute.

Rafsanjani told the radio that a large turnout would show the people's interest in shaping their own destiny.

Since taking office in August, he has pushed economic reforms to give a greater role to the private sector and spur production at home. He also tried to forge better ties with the outside world.

Hardliners have voiced concern that the emphasis on economic development may threaten Islamic values championed by the late supreme leader Ayatollah Khomeini.

Friday's poll is not expected to change the balance of power in the 270-seat Parliament. But Rafsanjani could use victory by moderate candidates as a sign of widespread backing to pursue his policies more forcefully.

The election could also provide a new platform for Ali Akbar Mohtashemi, a fiercely anti-Western cleric standing for Parliament after Rafsanjani replaced him as interior minister.

Mohtashemi and three other ex-ministers have been endorsed by the hardline Tehran militant clergyman group which favours exporting the Islamic revolution and commands a majority in Parliament.

The militant clergy association, which is more moderate and backs free-market policies, fields two ex-ministers, a woman and a prominent clergyman.

Campaigning, unusually heated for mid-term elections, was marked by accusations of foul play.

Resalat newspaper said hecklers shouted down two association candidates during a campaign meeting at Tehran University and radical students also switched off lights, beat a reporter and tore up campaign literature.

Pak-Iran extradition accord

ATHENS, Dec 15, (UPI): Pakistan has reached agreement with Iran to extradite Iranian "convicts and counter-revolutionaries" who flee across their common border, the official Islamic republic news agency said today.

The agreement was reached at a meeting of officials of the two sides in the Iranian border town of Zahedan.

An Iran dispatch monitored in Athens said: "All Iranian convicts and counter-revolutionaries who have fled to Pakistan will be arrested and extradited to Iran," officials at the meeting decided.

Thousands of Iranian political dissidents fleeing the country are known to have crossed the border into Pakistan to escape arrest by revolutionary guards who support the ruling cleric.

Iranian officials refer to political dissidents and members of banned opposition groups as counter-revolutionaries.

Iran also claims that traffickers bringing opium, heroin and hashish into the country, cross the Pakistan border into the southeastern Baluchistan and Sistan province.

Iranian Interior Minister Abdullah Noori announced after a visit to Pakistan last month that the two countries had agreed to co-operate in combating the narcotics trade, but he gave no details of the agreement.

Ira quoted a Pakistani official at the Zahedan meeting as saying his country would "take necessary measures to extradite Iranian convicts to Islamic republic upon receiving their particulars."

Sudan military rulers planning to revive Islamic laws

KHARTOUM, Dec 15, (Reuters): Sudan's military rulers are planning to revive Islamic sharia laws fiercely opposed by rebels fighting a civil war in the south, Sudanese and diplomatic sources said yesterday.

They said a revival of the laws in the mainly Arabised and Muslim north would diminish hopes of peace in the predominantly Christian and animist south, where the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) has been battling since 1983.

Sharia prescribes stoning to death for adultery, amputation for theft and flogging for drinking. Its introduction in 1983 angered human rights groups at home and abroad and

scores of non-Muslim southerners had limbs amputated.

The law, dormant since 1985, fuelled the ranks of southern rebels. Plans to revive the harsh code confirmed fears voiced by banned political parties that Khartoum's 15-man junta was embracing militant Islamic ideology, the sources said.

The sources said they suspected that the junta led by General Omar Hassan Al Bashir, who seized power on June 30, was linked to the National Islamic Front (NIF) party.

The NIF for years campaigned for strict sharia punishments and a hard line against rebels. The junta denies such a link.

"It is not any more a question of whether the junta is one of Muslim fundamentalists or not," a Khartoum University lecturer told Reuters. "It is now a question of whether they are entertaining the idea of announcing an Islamic republic."

Peace talks in August and earlier this month collapsed over the sharia issue. The SPLA wants Sudan governed by secular laws.

The junta wants sharia implemented in regions where Muslims are in the majority under a proposed federal system rejected by the rebels.

People frightened needlessly

Cholesterol debate

CHICAGO, (AP): A 2-year-old US government campaign to increase awareness about cholesterol has focussed new debate on the fatty substance and stirred debate on how hard people should try to avoid it.

Researchers are releasing new studies detailing how excess cholesterol — an essential building block of cell membranes, sex hormones and vitamin D — clogs vessels and causes heart attacks.

Food manufacturers are devising new products to capitalize on the findings, splashing "cholesterol-free" banners across items ranging from cupcakes to peanut butter, which never contained cholesterol anyway.

But some experts say that the public is being frightened needlessly. They say that many won't benefit from low-cholesterol diets, and that money is wasted to try to get people to change the way they eat.

US researchers have spent hundreds of millions of dollars trying to determine how bad cholesterol is and whether cutting down on it increases a person's chances of living longer. Many top scientists are convinced of the results.

"The evidence linking elevated blood cholesterol to coronary heart disease is overwhelming," a group of researchers said recently in a statement by the American Heart Association and the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute.

Population studies, clinical trials, genetic tests and animal experiments show how high levels of blood cholesterol clog arteries and increase the risk of heart disease, the statement said. It added that clinical trials lowering cholesterol levels by diet or drugs decreases subsequent occurrence of heart disease.

"The direct evidence... is strongest in middle-aged men with high initial cholesterol levels," but also strongly suggests cutting cholesterol is likely to decrease coronary heart disease incidence in younger and older men, in women, and in persons with more moderate cholesterol levels, the statement said.

Two of the largest studies suggest that a 1 per cent reduction in blood cholesterol translates into a 2 per cent reduction in the risk of developing coronary heart disease, the statement said.

Those studies — the coronary primary prevention trial, involving more than 3,800 middle-aged men, and the Framingham heart study of more than 5,000 women and men — have been supported by others suggesting greater benefit, the statement said.

Researchers in 17 European nations and in Canada have reached similar conclusions, said Dr Daniel Steinberg, a professor of medicine at the University of California at San Diego.

"This is not sort of an off-the-wall conclusion by Americans who are gunning against cholesterol," Steinberg said.

However, critics of the anti-cholesterol cam-

paign contend it has misled people by excluding mention of other major contributors to heart disease, America's No. 1 killer, which claims more than 500,000 lives a year.

One critic, Dr Robert Olson, professor of medicine and pharmacological science at the State University of New York at Stony Brook, says only about 20 per cent of a person's heart-disease risk is attributable to blood cholesterol.

An estimated 40 per cent is hereditary and the rest is due to other causes, chiefly smoking and the high blood pressure, he said.

"We think there's too much hype in the marketplace and even in these educational agencies," Olson said. "Everybody's sort of afraid of their food and afraid of their cholesterol, often without medical surveillance."

Dr Fredrick Stare, Harvard nutrition professor emeritus and co-author of "Balanced Nutrition: Beyond the Cholesterol Scare," agrees. "We don't think the national cholesterol education programme gives enough attention to other risk factors that are more important — smoking, high blood pressure, obesity, diabetes, lack of a reasonable amount of activity and stress."

The British Royal College of Physicians recommended in February that checking family histories for heart attacks is more important than cholesterol testing, said Victor Herbert, professor of medicine at New York's Mount Sinai Hospital. "I agree with them. If a lot of people in the family didn't have heart attacks, you're not going to have one."

Cholesterol testing becomes appropriate if the family history suggests a genetic tendency to heart attack, he said. Cholesterol-modifying efforts should begin only if blood levels are high for so-called "bad cholesterol" — LDL, or low-density lipoprotein — and low so-called "good cholesterol" — HDL, or high-density lipoprotein.

Olson and Herbert were on a panel assembled in September by the Council on Science and Health, a consumer education group partly funded by the food industry, to offset what they call the cholesterol "scare."

Part of their message was that only 15 per cent of the population have blood-cholesterol levels putting them clearly at greater risk for heart attacks.

That level is generally agreed to be 240 milligrams per decilitre of blood, and people testing that high "should be seeing a physician... they should not be self-medicating themselves" with diet changes, said Elizabeth Whelan, the council's president.

Dr John Larosa, chairman of the task force on cholesterol issues for the American Heart Association, says critics "are not really saying anything different" from the government scientists.

Their guidelines are unchanged since being introduced two years ago as part of the national cholesterol education programme.



Still rolling

Rolling Stones lead singer Mick Jagger wields his guitar in the opening of their two-night show in Montreal, Canada. (Reuter wirephoto)

Collins' another day in paradise

NEW YORK, (AP): "Another Day in Paradise" took Phil Collins to the top of the single pop record charts in the United States Wednesday. The hit disc hopped up from second place a week ago.

Billy Joel's "We Didn't Start the Fire" slipped one notch to second position on the Cash Box magazine chart, while "Back to Life" by Soul went from fourth to third.

Last week's number three hit, "Angelia" by Richard Marx, topped to eighth spot.

The Top 10 pop singles, as rated by Cash Box magazine, with last week's positions in brackets:

- (1) Another Day in Paradise — Phil Collins (Atlantic)
- (2) We Didn't Start the Fire — Billy Joel (Columbia)
- (3) Back to Life — Soul to Soul (Virgin)
- (4) Don't Know Much — Linda Ronstadt and Aaron Neville (Elektra)
- (5) Rhythm Nation — Janet Jackson (A and M)
- (6) With Every Beat of My Heart — Taylor Dayne (Arista)
- (7) The Way That You Love Me — Paula Abdul (Virgin)
- (8) Angelia — Richard Marx (EMI)

The Top 10 country-western singles, as rated by Cash Box magazine, with last week's positions in brackets:

- (1) The Lonely Side of Love — Patty Loveless (MCA)
- (2) I've Been Loved By The Best — Don Williams (RCA)
- (3) A Woman in Love — Ronnie Milsap (RCA)
- (4) Out of Your Shoes — Lorie Morgan (RCA)
- (5) If Tomorrow Never Comes — Garth Brooks (Capitol)
- (6) There Goes My Heart — Holly Dunn (Warner Brothers)
- (7) Who's Lonely Now — Highway 101 (Warner Brothers)
- (8) Yellow Roses — Dolly Parton (Columbia)
- (9) That Just About Does It — Vern Gosdin (Columbia)

And in London after entering the charts last week in third spot, Soul II Soul's fast-selling "Get a Life" single has jumped two places to top the British pop singles chart.

Five Bunny and the Mastermixers returned to the charts this week, entering at number two with "Let's Party."

Veil guards a man's honour
Touareg tradition

DIJANET, Algeria. (Reuter): Legend has it that many centuries ago, Touareg tribesmen of the central Sahara donned the veil to trick their enemies into thinking they were women.

The trick worked, the enemy was routed and ever since then the Touareg, a Berber tribe of North Africa, have clung to a tradition which sets them apart from other Muslims: the men are veiled and the women are not.

Gone are the days of tribal raids, great camel caravans and endless treks for desert pasture. But men in the oasis of Djanet near the Libyan and Niger borders still wrap their faces in a long knotted turban which at times leaves only a slit for the eyes.

"With family, it's okay to let the turban down," said Sakilil Dawdy, 34, a driver with the Algerian state hydrocarbons firm Sonatrach. "But on the street, in front of strangers or as a guest, you must wear it. It's a question of honour."

The Touareg turban, or shesh, has come to symbolise the identity of a proud warrior tribe of nomads which has preserved its language and customs under Turkish, French and Arab rule.

About 700,000 Touareg live in the Saharan and Sahel regions of Algeria, Libya, Niger and Mali, although less than half maintain the nomadic or semi-nomadic pastoral life of their forefathers.

The turban is increasingly discarded by the young who pick up Arab or Western ways at school and through television, heaped to Djanet by satellite from Algiers 2,000 km (1,250 miles) to the northwest.

But few men over 30 fail to cover their face when they leave home for the fields, the office or a simple village errand. Even the young cover up on special occasions and say that beneath their jeans and disco haircuts they remain true to their Touareg roots.

"There are old men whose women have never seen their

mouths in 40 years of marriage," said Harmou Dahou, director of the Tim-Bour travel agency.

The Touareg veil has fascinated visitors ever since the Arab traveller and observer Ibn Khaldun toured North Africa in the 14th century and found most Berber desert tribesmen wrapped up tightly in a ball of cloth.

The turban humidifies the mouth and nose in the dry desert air and protects them like a filter when wind whips up clouds of choking sand. But the custom is so closely linked to honour that one French ethnologist spoke of a "taboo of the mouth."

"Showing your mouth was considered a sign of greed," said Hachem Suliman, 60, a member of Djanet's town council.

"In the old days, the first time a boy put on the turban there was a big ceremony because it meant he had become a man," said Hachem Suliman.

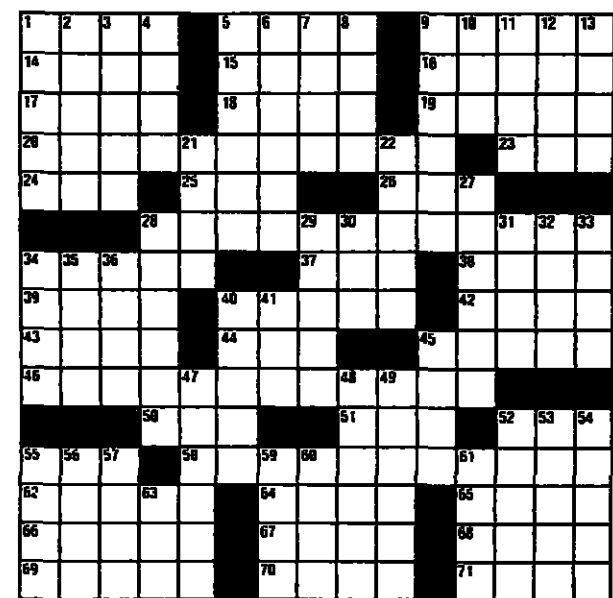
"A special wedding ceremony was dancing and music. The bride was given a dagger and taught the principles of our tradition: courage, honesty, fidelity, respect for family and never to strike a woman."

"Now the young men are more conservative. They still wear a simple scarf, but the head-to-expose-locks-of-hair and the entire face is covered by a draw string in conservative Arab dress."

Touareg women enjoy greater freedom than Arab women. Men and women mix easily and a girl can always veto a marriage proposal, said Hachem Suliman. Women are key participants in any celebration.

Love letters were traditionally exchanged in the Tefinar script, a 24-character alphabet of lines, circles and dots whose earliest known appearance has been dated to 1,200 BC.

TODAY'S CROSSWORD



- ACROSS**
- They — to Cordura: 1959 movie
 - Golden Gate, for one
 - Puccini's "La —"
 - Med. sch. subj.
 - Remove rind
 - Jack
 - Spanish painter
 - Joan
 - Landed
 - "Midnight Cowboy" character
 - Telling it like it is
 - Go astray
 - Bishopric
 - French
 - connections
 - Taylor of films
 - Telling it like it is
 - Casual conversations
 - Aeronautics gp.
 - "Utopia" writer
 - American Beauty
 - Condescend
 - Vegas machine
 - Opposed
 - "Heldenleben": Strauss
 - Wherewithal
 - Telling it like it is
 - Gal of song
 - Feedbag morsel
 - Pershing's gp.
 - Household member
 - Telling it like it is
 - SA tribe
 - Nobelists Wiesel
- DOWN**
- Travel permit
 - Famed fountain in Rome
 - Ananias
 - Hot times in Paris
 - Icy rain
 - Cobs
 - companions
 - Endure
 - DOWN
 - 1957 Literature Nobelist
 - Aromatic seed
 - A Cune
 - School near Windsor
 - Castle
 - Ancient Greek
 - Most wan
 - Highlight from Handel
 - New Jersey five
 - "The — the Screw": Henry James tale
 - Three — match
 - Makes a lap
 - Mozart's " — fan tulle"
 - In a short time
 - Fathoms
 - Church instrument
 - Maiden, often in distress
 - Mugs
 - Cake
 - topping
 - Badger
 - Soft drink
 - Disney scribble
 - Groups
 - Grouch
 - Sharpen
 - spumante

GOREN BRIDGE

BY CHARLES GOREN AND OMAR SHARIF
SEEKING ISN'T ALWAYS BELIEVING

Both vulnerable. South deals.

NORTH
♠ J 8 6
♥ K 6 2
♦ 10 7 3
♣ Q J 8 4

WEST
♠ 5 3
♥ A 10 7
♦ Q 6 4 2
♣ K 9 5 3

EAST
♠ Q 10
♥ J 8 5 3
♦ K J 9
♣ 10 7 6 2

SOUTH
♠ A K 9 7 4 2
♥ Q 9 4
♦ A 8 5
♣ A

The bidding:
South West North East
1 ♠ Pass 1 NT Pass
3 ♠ Pass 4 ♠ Pass
Pass Pass

Opening lead: Five of ♠

In his Bols Bridge Tip, Terence Reese suggests that there are times

when a simple falsecard may achieve a spectacular result for the defense.

This is one of the hands Reese cites to illustrate the point.

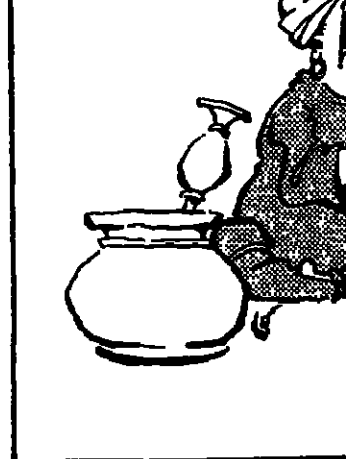
After a simple auction, North-South reach a contract of four spades. Since a lead from any of the plain suits is unappealing, West chooses to lead a trump.

Let's see what would happen with routine defense. East's ten would force the king and declarer would cash the ace. When both opponents follow, declarer cashes the ace of clubs, crosses to the jack of spades and leads the queen of clubs. If East covers with the king, declarer ruffs and, since the ace of hearts is with West, another red-suit loser can be discarded on the jack of clubs. If East does not cover, declarer discards a diamond and, at most, he loses a trick in hearts, diamonds and clubs. Either way, the contract would be cold.

Now let's suppose East were to play the queen of trumps on the opening lead. Declarer wins and, if the trump queen were indeed singleton, there is a safer line to 10 tricks than relying on West to hold the ace of hearts. Declarer could cash the ace of clubs and then lead a trump to the eight(1), playing West for the ten. That allows East to gain the lead with the ten of spades and a diamond return dooms the contract. With an unexpected trump trick in the bank, the defenders must come to three more tricks no matter how declarer maneuvers.

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE:

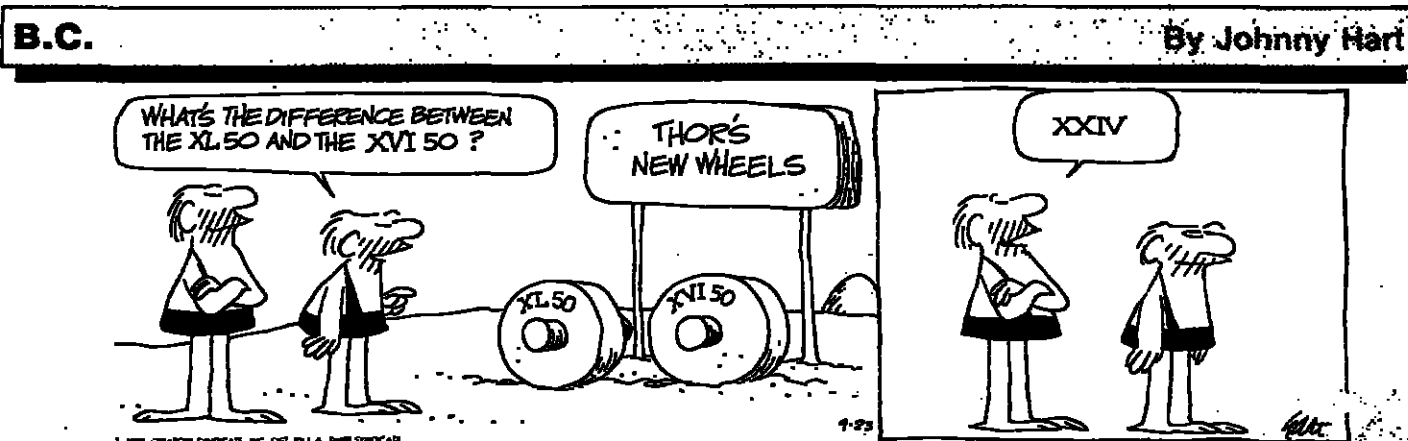
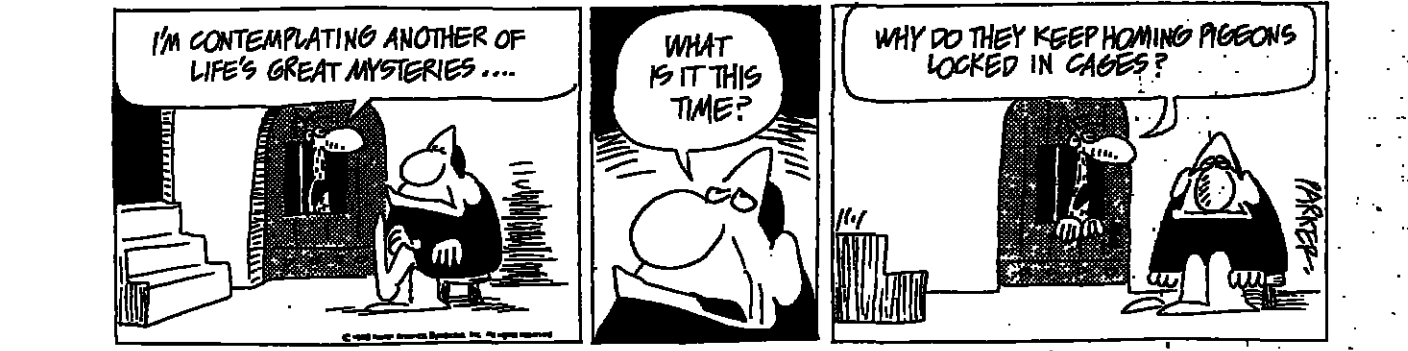
MOM PIPS BOLT
AVEG PISAN ALAI
REDO RAISE RIME
CREAM OFF THE CROP
STATISTIC AREA
SUDDS SECTOR
FIRSTRATE SURGE
INTEE EROSE DORA
STARK TOPDRAWER
HOPING LOGE
AULA INGEST
SALT OF THE EARTH
ATRIAL AIRES BREX
METIZ TREAT SOLIE
APSE SEED RAW



"I gotta get new glasses."

THE WIZARD OF ID

By Brant Parker and Johnny Hart



YOUR STARS

<p>Aries (March 20 - April 18)</p> <p>You will feel a little less sure of yourself. You should not be slow to make up your mind. Do not let others steal your glory. Be sensible.</p>	<p>Cancer (June 21 - July 21)</p> <p>Avoid making a nuisance of yourself. You will be able to do something to make yourself more popular. You should avoid getting into a muddle. Be on time.</p>	<p>Libra (Sept 22 - Oct 22)</p> <p>Make sure you keep within certain safe limits. Do not let some secondary matter take up too much of your time. Control yourself and do not bully others. Be moderate.</p>	<p>Capricorn (Dec 22 - Jan 19)</p> <p>There will be some tensions and you should do your best to minimize them. A little more patience is needed just now. Avoid being obstinate. Be resilient.</p>
<p>Taurus (April 19 - May 19)</p> <p>Things are not nearly as bad as they might seem. You will have stimulating experience. Let others tell you what they think. Be less frivolous.</p>	<p>Leo (July 22 - Aug 21)</p> <p>Listen as well as saying what you think. And do not think you know everything. Do not be in too great a hurry. Be less selfish.</p>	<p>Scorpio (Oct 23 - Nov 21)</p> <p>Keep your eyes and ears open. You will be able to clear up your ideas. Do not try to mend something complicated unless you know what you are about. Be helpful.</p>	<p>Aquarius (Jan 20 - Feb. 18)</p> <p>Your social life will take a turn for the better. Make sure you do not allow your car to go too long without a service. You may easily forget to think again whether you may have done so. Be lenient.</p>
<p>Gemini (May 20 - June 20)</p> <p>You will be able to do something you have long wanted to do. Do not let a friend down. Avoid spending too many late nights. Be less conspicuous.</p>	<p>Virgo (Aug 22 - Sept 21)</p> <p>You should try not to neglect something you find a little unpleasant. The truth will not go away by ignoring it. Try to avoid emotional complications. Be sensible.</p>	<p>Sagittarius (Nov 22 - Dec 21)</p> <p>You should keep calm even if provoked. Do not show all your cards. Avoid being long-winded. Be prompt.</p>	<p>Pisces (Feb 19 - March 19)</p> <p>You will be more approachable. You should not become obsessed by something that is not really important. Enjoy yourself. Be reliable.</p>

BUSINESS & FINANCE

Baker calls for closer American, EEC links

BRUSSELS, Dec 15, (Reuters): US Secretary of State James Baker called for sweeping new co-operation between the United States and the European Economic Community when the two sides met for high-level talks in Brussels today.

In remarks prepared for delivery at a news conference after the annual US-EEC ministerial meeting, Baker urged closer transatlantic links with the 12-nation EEC on security, political, commercial and scientific matters.

"If we can develop commercial, political and science agreements with the member states it seems reasonable to explore what we might develop with the community itself," he said.

Baker, who on Tuesday proposed a treaty between the EEC and the United States to formalise closer ties, said he did not want to impose his ideas on Europe, but sought to start a dialogue on the possibilities.

He said the annual consultations with the EEC executive commission, traditionally held in conjunction with Nato ministerial meetings, should be made separate, and proposed next year's session be held in Washington.

Baker met EEC Commission president Jacques Delors. Farm, trade, commerce and environment chiefs from the two sides also met in an intensive full-day of talks.

Baker suggested other areas for co-operation could be the fight against terrorism, and drugs, and the environment.

"US co-operation with a new European environmental agency could help us to tackle global problems that respect the borders," Baker said.

US commits \$200m to Poland

WASHINGTON, Dec 15, (UPI): The White House announced a US commitment of as much as \$200 million yesterday to a proposed \$500 million multilateral bridge loan to help further the implementation of economic reforms in Poland.

Deputy White House Press Secretary Steve Hart said the loan arrangement under discussion would be contingent on agreement between Poland and the International Monetary Fund on an economic reform plan.

The loan would help Poland meet its financial obligations until it begins receiving expected assistance from the IMF and the World Bank. The loan then would be repaid from the IMF financing and World Bank loans.

Economy set to grow further: envoy

By M.C. Bose
Business editor

THE NRI Investors' Forum, Kuwait held its General Body Meeting yesterday at the Indian embassy auditorium, under the chairmanship of C.S.S. Khanpuri.

The chief-guest was the Indian Ambassador, A.K. Budhiraja, who drew the attention of the audience to the ever increasing investment opportunities in India and said that the Indian economy has achieved a great momentum, and this momentum and the positive direction of the economy would not be affected or reversed whatever the political changes in India.

The ambassador said real GNP has grown each year by 6 per cent manufacturing output by nearly 9 per cent, export volumes by 10 per cent. The government will follow economic liberalisation policy, giving new impetus to the agro-based industries and stock market.

While talking about government economic policy Budhiraja quoted both finance minister and industry minister and said the process of liberalisation will not be reversed. The government will try to strengthen industry and investment.

An important feature of the meeting was the annual award of 'NRI of the Year' trophy. This trophy is given annually to a non-resident Indian living in Kuwait who has performed unique service to the Indian community at large here and/or has contributed to the understanding between Kuwaitis and the Indian community through social service or otherwise. The honour for this year was bestowed on Dr. Jacob Oommen, a prominent Indian surgeon who has been serving the community and the Kuwaitis alike with great devotion and dedication for about 35 years.

The ambassador presented the trophy to him.

Dr. Oommen came to Kuwait in 1951 and served in the American Mission Hospital. In 1952 he moved to Qatar where he served for 4 years. The next six years he spent in Europe doing advanced medical studies and returned to India. He also served in Singapore for a year.

In 1964 he returned to Kuwait, served in the American Mission Hos-



Picture shows from (left to right) Gururaj Rao, Kamalesh Gandhi, C.S.S. Khanpuri, A.K. Budhiraja, Rajan Nireswalla, S.V. Ranganath and K.A. Valsan.



A.K. Budhiraja addresses the meeting.

Ranganath said the most important item for an NRI interested in investing in India is the proper selection of the project. "He must be thoroughly familiar with the product he is seeking to manufacture. The Indian Investment Centre (IIC) gives guidance in the selection of projects. In the IIC, we have project profiles of 780 small scale projects prepared by Development Commissioner Small Scale Industries, Govt of India. Projects selected by the various state industries investment corporations (these are in the medium and large scale sectors and number around 500)."

He said state-wise list of projects, prepared by IDBI where the concerned State Industries Investment Corporation is looking for NRI co-promoters. The NRI entrepreneurs can take advantage of this material in the selection of their projects. However a project profile should not be construed as a project report. A project profile helps the NRI entrepreneur to get a general idea about the project and it is necessary that a proper project report is got prepared.

"The IIC also assists in giving information about government policies and procedures assisting in securing approval of govt authorities. Helping in resolving snags, if any in the process of implementation. Functioning as a single window agency and providing escort services," Ranganath said.

There is a feeling among NRI's that they have to face bureaucratic hurdles in setting up industries in India. However, it is possible to overcome most of these problems if it is followed up systematically. Many NRI projects have run into difficulties on account of the fact that NRI's are not fully aware of the changes in the govt policy and procedures. The NRI's in Kuwait should take advantage of the services of Indian Investment Centre, Abu Dhabi.

The policy of the Govt of India is to encourage industrialisation and NRI investment in India. India is a land of opportunities with all-round economic progress and the immense potential available, it makes strong business sense to invest and take advantage of these opportunities.

Comprehensive Arab gas market vital

Call to intensify exploration

DOHA, Dec 15, (Opecna): "How to promote regional co-operation among Arab countries to turn the region into an international gas market," is the theme of a number of research studies presented to the second five-day seminar on gas co-operation among Arab countries which ended here yesterday.

The seminar emphasised the need to intensify research and exploration activities in Arab countries and to develop the already discovered resources. Proven natural gas reserves in the Arab world are estimated 24 trillion cubic metres (857 trillion cubic feet) or 22 per cent of world reserves.

The seminar called for the establishment of a comprehensive Arab gas market, noting that utilisation of gas in the region could be more profitable than even export, though adding that if exports were found profitable, international markets should not be ignored.

A communique issued called on Arab countries to follow international developments in terms of new technologies, especially those involving gas liquefaction. It also urged exchange of expertise among Arab countries in the gas production and industrialisation.

One presentation by Robert Mabro, director of the Energy Studies Institute at Oxford University, noted that a plan to link Gulf countries with a gas network utilising Qatar's giant North Gasfield was economically feasible.

He pointed out that such a grid could eventually link the region with Turkey and later with Western Europe.

The idea was also backed in a research paper presented by Jassem Al Gumer, head of the economic department at the Organisation of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (Opec).

Mabro forecast increasing world demand for gas and oil in the next few years and said that oil prices would gradually rise in the next two years and markedly so after 1993, in view of growing world demand.

In reviewing the market situation, he affirmed that gas requirements would increase in the United States, Europe and the Far East.

Mabro emphasised the need for greater Arab co-operation in the gas industry. He also noted that in view of international détente, more markets in the US and Western Europe would be open to Soviet gas exports.

Al Gumer also stressed the need to develop the Arab gas industry. He said Arab states had succeeded in reducing the portion of flared gas from 70 per cent in the 1970s to just 10 per cent at present, a reduction he attributed to the growth of the gas industry.

He called for expanding the use of gas in electricity generating stations in Arab countries and for increasing exports of oil derivatives, noting that efforts were underway to replace oil with gas as fuel wherever possible and to export larger quantities of oil.

"This will be the major trend in the next years. New gas finds in the Arab world will encourage Arab countries to find export outlets," he explains.

He noted that the current capacity of the Arab gas industry had reached 30-40 million tons of oil equivalent a year or 10 per cent of world trade.

Opec Secretary-General Abdul Aziz Al Watarani said that proven natural gas reserves in the Arab countries totalled 24 trillion cu. metres or 22 per cent of world reserves.

Dollar jolted by US trade figures

LONDON, Dec 15, (Reuters): US trade and inflation figures jolted the dollar on Friday, dragging it down more than a plem against the West German mark before the US currency picked up some lost ground in later European trading.

Data from Washington showed the US trade gap jumped 20 per cent to a worse-than-expected \$10.2 billion in October, while September's shortfall was revised upwards to \$8.5 billion from 7.9 billion.

A 0.1 per cent drop in US producer prices in November indicated domestic inflationary pressures were easing and economists said this could prompt the Federal Reserve, America's central bank, to relax credit policy further.

"It's quite feasible that we could see an easing as early as next week," said Tim Fox, treasury economist at London's Midland Bank. "The dollar could well drop below 1.70 marks in the near-term."

The dollar stood around 1.7335 marks just before the figures were announced but quickly fell to around 1.7175.

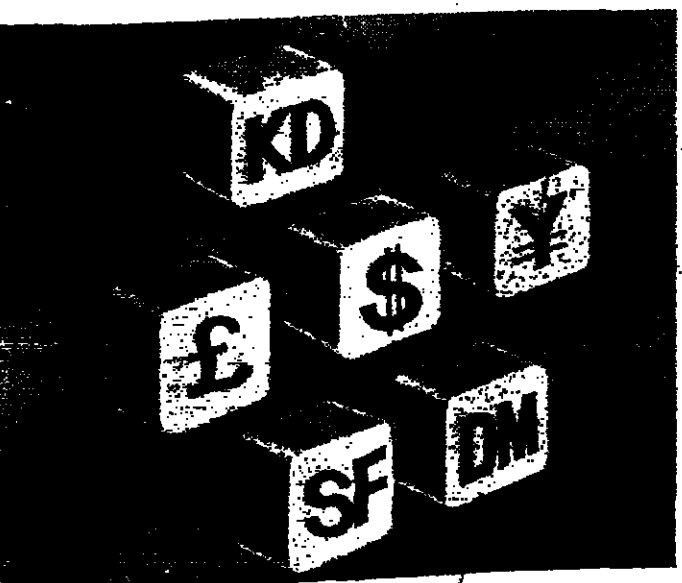
The weaker dollar helped lift gold, boosting the price by \$3.75 to close in London at \$412 an ounce.

Dealers said the metal looked set to stay in a \$405 to 415 range for the rest of the year.

Indian rupee 17.510
Sri Lanka rupee 7.450
Pakistan rupee 13.910
Bangladesh taka 9.060
US dollar 29.520
Pound sterling 47.325
UAE dirham 06034
Deutsche mark 17120
Japanese yen 002056

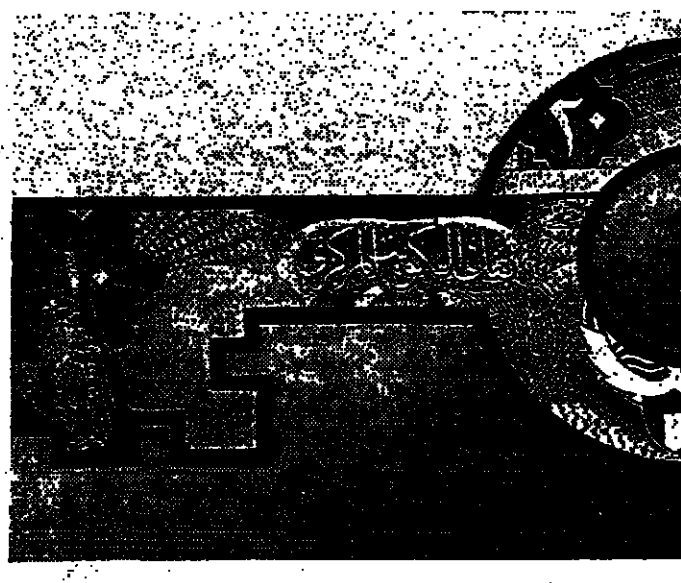
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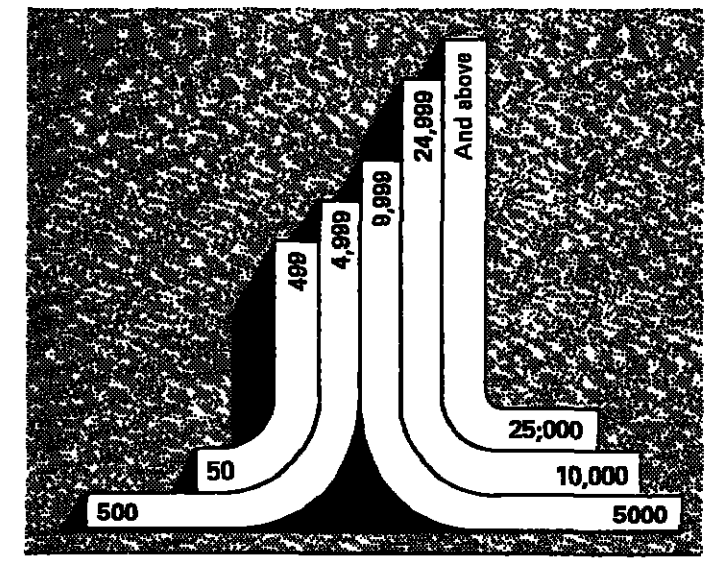
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BANGLADESH

VICTORY DAY
AN ARAB TIMES SUPPLEMENT

Faith in non-alignment unshakable

Support intifada, lasting Gulf peace

Bangladesh President Hussain Muhammad Ershad's speech at the NAM summit held in Belgrade:

SINCE the first summit twenty-eight years ago in this historic city of Belgrade the world has changed but the spirit of non-alignment lives on.

The principles of non-alignment are embedded in the abhorrence and rejection of domination and hegemonism in international relations. It is surely remarkable that since its birth, the strength and relevance of non-alignment have in no way been impaired.

Bangladesh's faith in non-alignment is unshakable. We strongly believe that non-alignment



Ershad: confident will remain a viable and vibrant movement as long as political and economic dominance and

hegemonism of whatever source or origin exist. For small and weaker states constantly threatened by external aggression or internal subversion, non-alignment offers a key to their security and integrity. It remains our primary responsibility to safeguard member-states from the threat or the use of force.

The international situation has changed, perhaps in decisive ways, since the last summit in Harare. Surely the most significant change was the INF accord between the Soviet Union and the United States. It is the step in the definition of a realistic agenda of disarmament.

A series of US-Soviet summits has induced a new global atmosphere and created new ways of looking at the world and its

problems. We are indeed at a critical juncture in history — a moment that is pregnant with the seeds of momentous change.

In this changed scenario, non-alignment continues to offer the positive philosophy of international co-operation and peaceful co-existence.

This basic philosophy does not exempt us from sharpening not only our ideas and concepts but also the methodology of our movement, as we seek to make out deliberations more business-like and pertinent.

As the movement grows in age and stature, it is necessary to identify concrete areas where the non-aligned nations can make a substantive contribution. No field offers a more realistic and urgent opportunity than disarmament and in particular nuclear disarmament.

The continuing deliberations on the link between disarmament and development call for specific inputs from the non-aligned nations. In addition to the study on the release of resources through disarmament and for development, other less obvious structural linkages between disarmament and development need to be defined and scientifically enunciated.

The movement can justly take pride in our significant contribution to the resolution of many problems. We are particularly pleased that the tragedy of the Gulf war is over. Efforts must now be devoted to erecting the structure (Continued on Page 18)

Bangladesh urges action on economy

Bangladesh Foreign Minister Anisul Islam Mahmud's speech at the 44th UN General Assembly meeting, held in New York, on Sept 1:



Anisul Islam Mahmud

THERE is much the U.N. system has achieved, though more remains to be done. Nonetheless, in recent months, the credibility of our organisation has not only enhanced but the confidence of the global community in its institutions has also taken firm roots. Today there is widespread belief that the U.N. has the unique potential and capacity not only to adjust multi-dimensional contemporary problems through co-operative approach and management.

Bangladesh, to improve the global economic climate would call for concerted and urgent action on the following:

First, substantial increase in concessional financial flows to developing countries and reversal of the flow of world's investible surplus to meet the need for

investment in developing countries.

Secondly, adoption and implementation of measures to reduce and restructure the crushing debt burden.

Thirdly, finding ways and means to improve export earning potential of developing countries through expansion of markets, trade liberalization etc.

Fourthly, recognition of the crucial link between trade, development, and debt.

Finally, harnessing and mobilizing human resources development especially through concentration on an effective basic needs framework. This should include emphasis on the disadvantaged segments — women, the children and the handicapped.

While greater co-operative and urgent action are demanded on the economic front, we can draw comfort from progress made on a number of political issues. These are taking place today on the matrix of a far more (Continued on Page 18)

On the road to prosperity

TODAY is the 18th anniversary of our great Victory Day, the day that will perpetually inspire us to our national struggle for a new, happy and prosperous Bangladesh. On this auspicious occasion, I extend my warmest greetings to all our compatriots in Kuwait to pay our richest tributes to the immortal martyrs of our liberation struggle. It was their unparalleled patriotism and supreme self-sacrifice that made the ultimate victory possible. May their sacred souls repose in eternal peace in heaven.

On this historic day, I extend my heartfelt felicitations to all the Bangladeshis living in Kuwait for the good image they

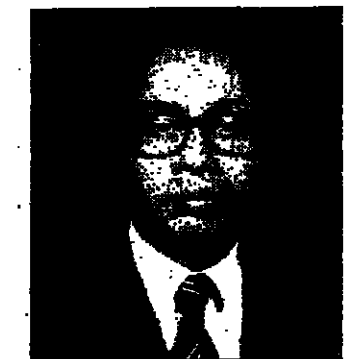
have created of themselves here and also for their contribution to the Bangladesh economy.

By the grace of Almighty Allah, 1989 has been a happy year for the country. The economy has shown impressive recovery from last year's devastating floods. Happily, we had bumper crops due to the absence of natural calamities this year.

Meanwhile, the government has undertaken a number of short-term and long-term steps to control future floods. It is a matter of great satisfaction for us that the international donor community has spontaneously come forward with a pledge to eradicate this monstrous scourge

of floods in Bangladesh. The international donor community has just concluded a two-day meeting in London on the problem of current floods in Bangladesh. Kuwait also participated in this meeting. They have been making a concerted effort for flood-control in our country. We owe them a debt of gratitude for their keen interest in the welfare of our people and the country.

Potential. Once our land was known for its riches. It used to be called "the Bengal of gold". Even now we have enormous potentialities. But we are unable to make use of them for lack of requisite capital.



K.M. Shehabuddin She has abundant raw materials for industries of different kinds. The new industrial policy offers (Continued on Page 18)

On the auspicious occasion of VICTORY DAY

In remembrance of The Vallant Martyrs of 1971

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War of liberation

The triumph of a nation

By Ahmed Fazi

It was perhaps the longest night for those who kept vigil seven years ago waiting for the dawn of 16 December and the first rays of freedom to shine on the alluvial lush plains of Bangladesh. And when the guns were silenced, the eerie monotony of the last days of the war were broken by an euphoric outburst of victory.

The homecoming of the heroic freedom fighters had started already and the streets were lined with people holding welcoming garlands. Bangladesh, then a nation of 75 million people had earned its freedom.

There were tens of thousands of people on the streets breathing the new air of freedom in the wintry morning. They were no longer speaking in whispers. The nine-month long war of independence was over. More than ninety thousand Pakistani soldiers had surrendered and Bangladesh emerged as a free and sovereign country.

Many countries immediately welcomed the advent of the new nation. Millions of people around the world who stand for human rights, liberty and justice applauded this epochal event.

In Dhaka, the capital of the new country, history was being created. There were both tears and joys of celebration. Many of the brave sons who went to the war for their motherland returned, but many did not. Almost three million died in the war. The blood of those freedom fighters had hallowed the soil.

The final struggle for independence started on the night of March 25, 1971.

Hundreds of thousands of people crossed the border into India as the Pakistani troops fanned into the districts. Soon they began to face the freedom fighters, the intrepid young men and women who had organized themselves into bands of fighting guerrillas.

Support
The valiant freedom fighters were supported by the farmers, the industrial workers, the writers, the artists and other intellectuals. The freedom fighters themselves came from all walks of life and they belonged to all ages. There were the young and the old, the literate and the unlettered, the clerk and the rickshaw puller.



Victory in the War of Liberation came at the cost of thousands of lives. Above: Mukti Bahini soldiers in action; below: soldiers take a rest.



The Bangladesh war of independence was a national struggle in its truest form. It came from the desire of a nation to assert its national identity — language, culture and distinct heritage.

Historians and political commentators tend to see the germs of the nationalist struggle in the movement for establishment of Bangla language which started soon after the partition of the South Asian subcontinent into the two nations of India and Pakistan in 1947. Bangla was the most widely spoken language in the then eastern wing of Pakistan (now Bangladesh). But the then

rulers of Pakistan tried to obliterate the language and replace it by Urdu, a language which was spoken by very few people in the region. Quite naturally the move to denigrate Bangla was vehemently opposed. This struggle led to the events of 21 February 1952. Several students were gunned down on the streets of Dhaka by police on the orders of the ruling clique at the time.

Outcome
The bloody outcome of the struggle later transformed into a heroic language movement. Bangla was established as a state language.

guage of Pakistan.

Bangladesh as a country had already taken its birth in the minds of the Bengalis in the late sixties.

An independent Bangladesh was declared on 26 March 1971 but it took nine months of bitter struggle to free the country. December 16, 1971, which marked the historic surrender of the Pakistani soldiers, symbolizes the triumph of the new nation. It has been appropriately called "Victory Day."

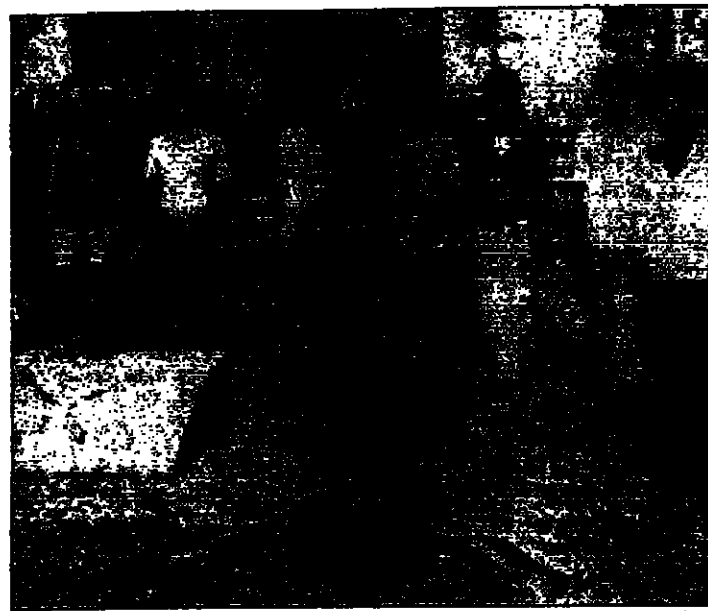
But the victory was the beginning of another struggle — this time it was for reconstruction of the war-ravaged economy and the fulfilment of national goals. Hundreds of bridges were destroyed, roads lay in ruins, food godowns were depleted and communication links were disrupted by the war.

The young country had to tackle a massive refugee problem. More than ten million people had crossed the border into India and they needed to return home and be rehabilitated. Most of these families had lost their shelters and sources of income. They, therefore, needed not only new houses but also jobs. Since the economy had been virtually halted by the nine-month-long war, there were not many jobs immediately available.

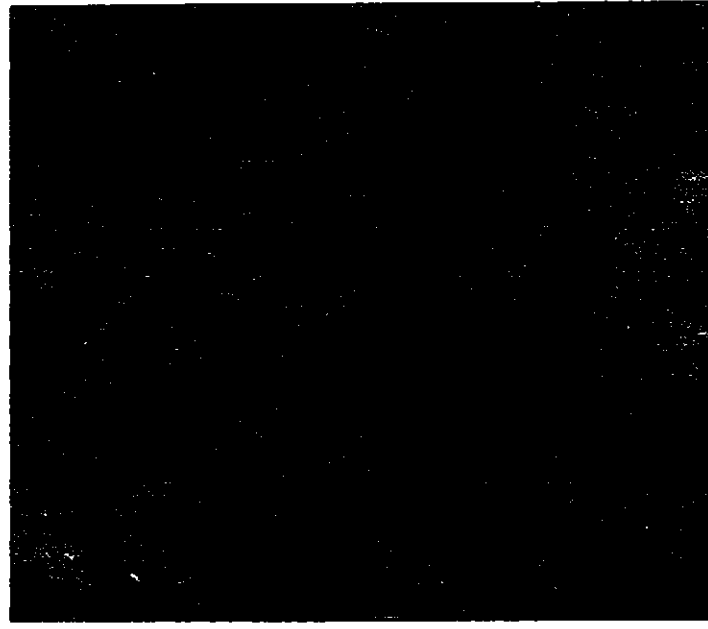
The factories had lost many of their skilled employees and in most cases new machinery had to be imported to replace the damaged plants. This required foreign exchange, but there were no such resources available with the newly established central bank.

Despite the crippling blow to the economy and the infrastructure, hopes were high and there was a national upsurge for rebuilding the country on the smouldering ashes of the war.

The victory in the War of Liberation came at the cost of hundreds of thousands of lives. Bangladesh was born out of the blood and tears of three million martyrs. Emerging from the ashes of the war, the country is now poised for an economic take-off. Despite the recent natural disasters, Bangladesh has been moving ahead with her economic and social goals and hope for a prosperous new Bangladesh is brighter than ever.



Above and below: young men organised themselves into bands of fighting guerrillas.



Freedom fighters were supported by farmers.

Ershad's vision

(Continued from Page 17)

of peace. Iraq and Iran represent two ancient cultures that have helped shape human civilization. They also have much to contribute to it in the future, and the world looks forward to it.

In Afghanistan, the Soviet Union displayed a remarkable commitment to its pledges by completing withdrawal of troops on schedule. However, the travails of our Afghan brethren are far from over. The five million refugees are yet to return home. The international community looks forward to an early resolution of their problems.

The Palestine problem continues to cause us great concern. The suffering of the Palestinian people grow more unbearable everyday. In the dark clouds of despair, the raging intifada is like a silver lining. We welcome the State of Palestine amidst us as a full-fledged member of the movement. We reiterate forcefully that there can be no peace without compliance with the relevant UN resolutions, particularly those proposing an early convening of an international peace conference with representation of the PLO on an equal footing with other parties. Peace cannot, and will not, come to the Middle East till the Palestinians can call their own lands home.

Our movement has a key role to play in the struggle against apartheid in South Africa, a despicable and hateful system, a crime against human dignity. The movement must continue to put pressure on the United Nations to impose mandatory economic sanctions on the Pretoria regime.

The present global economic situation unfortunately does not reflect the optimism with which we view the present international political scene. The gap between rich and the poor nations continues to widen. Quality of life of our peoples is steadily declining. Depressed commodity prices, widespread protectionism and restrictive trade practices, mounting debt burdens, reverse flow of resources from developing to developed countries — all these have compounded our difficulties.

Such a depressing international economic scenario requires, firstly, a global consensus on the approach to be taken to redress the situation, secondly, bearing in mind the interdependent nature of the global economy, an integrated approach covering the areas of money, finance, external debt, trade and development; and thirdly, a constructive dialogue between the countries of the North and the South. Such a dialogue must be global in character and conducted under the auspices of the United Nations.

Bangladesh proposes that the movement should first emphasize the continuing validity of the declaration and programme of action on the establishment of the New International Economic Order. Secondly, there is the need to focus the movement's thrust more and more towards the broader economic issues aimed at sustainable development. Thirdly, there is also the need for greater South-South co-operation. It is imperative, therefore, that the ECDC programme of the movement and of the Group of 77 are rationalised and harmonised for greater relevance and impact.

In such a situation where greater interaction and understanding among nations are required, the forty-two least developed countries, Bangladesh being one of them, badly require closer attention and greater concentration of efforts. We expect that the second UN conference on LDCs to be held in Paris next year will provide the much-needed focus to the development needs of these countries. We seek the full support of the movement for the cause of the LDCs.

The universal importance of ecological problems can hardly be denied. Development and environment economy and ecology are inseparably linked. The quest for development cannot succeed if it feeds upon the destruction of the environment. No nations can on its own tackle the problems.

In this context, as a concrete step, we propose that we commence immediately the process of preparing and adopting an international convention on Protection and Conservation of Global Climate.

No efforts at development can be complete without an atmosphere where protection of human rights is ensured. We in the movement should ensure promotion of human rights in all fields.

In a changing world the basic values of the movement such as reduction in the structural inequality in the global system and achievement of peace with development should remain unaffected and that the aspiration and moral courage to focus on the development concerns of the dependent nations of the world should be sustained. I am confident, that in the years ahead we shall be able to rest content in the comforting knowledge that the movement is in safe hands.

On the road to prosperity....

(Continued from Page 17)

excellent opportunities to foreign investors for secure and profitable investments. Export Processing Zone (EPZ) in Chittagong provides customs-free privileges and special incentives for the promotion and development of export-oriented industries by foreign and Bangladeshi entrepreneurs. Foreign investors from the USA, the UK, Sweden, Holland, Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong, Singapore, Thailand, Pakistan and Oman have invested in several projects in this EPZ. The government has,

meanwhile, decided to set up a new export processing zone at Dhaka with the back-up facilities of Zia International Airport for "enclave operations" for exports. It is scheduled to begin operation by the middle of 1991.

The cheap labour in Bangladesh keeps the cost of production low and prices competitive. Bangladesh's jute and jute-goods, leather and leather products, garments, tea, fish, vegetables and handicrafts have gained international market for their quality and competitive prices.

The potential tourism sector of the country is being systematically developed. Good hotels, motels, luxury buses and various other facilities have combined with the eternal and ubiquitous verdure of Bangladesh to attract increasing number of tourists from abroad.

Bangladesh and Kuwait have excellent relations founded on fraternal feelings. We are making concerted efforts to boost our bilateral co-operation in different fields, including trade and culture. Our views on important global issues are identical and we

are jointly endeavouring for the unity and progress of the Islamic Ummah. His Highness the Amir as the current chairman of the OIC, has made significant contributions in bringing about further solidarity of the Islamic Ummah. His patronisation in the compilation of an encyclopaedia on Muslim countries and holding of the recently concluded Peace and Friendship Games bear testimony to that. We pray to Allah for the continued peace and prosperity of Kuwait under the able and benevolent leadership of His Highness the Amir and His Highness the Crown Prince. I also wish to express the deep appreciation and thanks to the government and the people of Bangladesh to His Highness the Amir and His

Highness the Crown Prince and Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister for their abiding interest in the well-being of Bangladesh.

Bangladesh, under the dynamic leadership of President Hussain Muhammad Ershad, is making steady progress in every sphere despite frequent natural calamities and resource constraints. Innumerable people-oriented measures such as decentralisation of administration, land reforms, population control programme, distribution of land among the landless, establishment of Debt Arbitration Board, cluster villages, and Pathakali Trust, to name a few, have been taken for the welfare of the multitude. The denationalisation of

many state-owned industries have transformed them into profitable concerns which, in their turn, are contributing to the economic growth of Bangladesh. Bangladesh pursues a positive, balanced, constructive and forward-looking foreign policy with special emphasis on strengthening relations with Muslim countries. Her active roles in various international forums and her policy of friendship and co-operation with all peace-loving nations of the world have won her esteem and admiration of all nations.

Long live Bangladesh.
Long live Kuwait-Bangladesh friendship.
Message of the Ambassador of Bangladesh,
K. M. Shehabuddin.

Economic reforms

(Continued from Page 17)

relaxed global political backdrop, due largely to the commendable initiatives and efforts of the superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union, their leaders, governments and peoples. This has created a congenial climate for the U.N. system to address some specific problems.

Guns have fallen silent in the Gulf region and the bloodletting that eight years of fierce fratricidal war between Iran and Iraq involved has finally ended. Bangladesh is proud to be a part of Unitom, which today is helping keep the peace. We hope that direct negotiations between the parties would succeed in achieving a comprehensive, just and honourable settlement as envisaged in the Security Council Resolution 598 of 1987.

Sadly, some problems still remain intractable. In the Middle East, Israel's continued occupation of illegally acquired territories have created an explosive situation. The valiant intifada of the Palestinian people today serves as a clarion call to mobilize world public opinion against a brutal suppression of freedom. Israel must give up all Arab territories, including the Golan Heights, it so wrongly holds. We reiterate our support

for the early convening of an international peace conference, of which the PLO must be an equal and integral part. The problem of Palestine is at the heart of the Middle East crisis and its resolution is a sine qua non for peace in the area.

Disarmament remains, as always, in the forefront of our agenda. The INF agreement has been a historic step forward. A vital follow up should be the reduction of strategic nuclear weapons by at least 50 per cent and significant cutbacks in conventional forces. As for Bangladesh, a party to the NPT, we are constitutionally committed to the goal of general and complete disarmament.

We believe while nuclear disarmament is a priority item, a restraint in conventional arms is both urgent and necessary.

After years of ignoring alarm signals, concern over environment has now entered deep in our consciousness. The litany of causes and consequences have now become the jargon of every day mass media usage. The proposed 1992 U.N. Conference on Environment and Development should be able to draw up a blueprint for combined action, taking the due note of the developmental aspects of the environmental problems.

Heartiest Greetings to the Government & People of Bangladesh on the auspicious occasion of their Victory Day

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দুররাণী ইন্টারন্যাশনাল
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VICTORY DAY OF BANGLADESH:
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Private industry grows amid liberal investment laws

By A.K.M. Mosharraf Hossain

THE industrialisation policy of Bangladesh underwent major reforms in 1986 to encourage the private and foreign capital inflow.

Under the liberal, de-controlled policy, the government plays the role of promoter, assisting industry to grow. To further ease industrial investment, the government set up a Board of Investment in 1989.

Simultaneously, the government reviewed the trade policy, liberalising imports and taxes to create a congenial atmosphere for investment, both private and foreign investors.

Since 1986, no prior approval is needed for self-financed local industry, provided it is not on a "discouraged list". Prior approval is not needed to set up an industry with foreign capital if the cost does not exceed Taka 10 million (\$3.3 million) and the foreign equity is not more than 49 per cent. Joint ventures that do not come under this category must be approved by the Board of Investment. In all the other cases, the industry must be registered. For joint ventures, there is no fixed ratio of equity between foreign and local investors; equity upto 100 per cent is allowed.

During its 18 years history, Bangladesh has reviewed its industrial policy several times. One of the major changes came in 1978 when the ceiling on private sector investment was lifted. Two years later, Bangladesh passed a law to promote and protect foreign investments. Simultaneously, the process of disinvestment was started and the stock market was reactivated.

The New Industrial Policy (NIP) became operational in 1982. It introduced substantial changes, emphasising private enterprise.

When the policy was further liberalised in 1986, the government became a supporter of industrial development in the private sector. Licensing procedures were simplified. However, seven sectors were reserved for the public sector. These are:

- * arms, ammunition, defence equipment
- * electricity
- * afforestation
- * air transport (excluding cargo)

A liberal industrial policy has attracted investment, both local and foreign. New measures are being adopted to pump more funds into the industrial sector.

- atomic energy
- currency and minting
- All other sectors fall under the private sector. However, in areas where investment is desirable, the public sector may set up industries, independently or with the private sector.

Investment guarantee

The Foreign Private Investment (Promotion and protection) Act, 1980, gives legal protection to foreign investment in Bangladesh against expropriation and nationalisation and ensures equal treatment. Further, bilateral investment protection agreements have been signed by the government with several countries. Bangladesh is also a member of the Overseas Private Investment Corporation of America (OPIC), Multilateral Investment Guarantee Association (MIGA) and International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID).

Repatriation facilities: repatriation of capital invested including capital gains, remittance of all post-tax dividend and foreign capital, remittance of royalty and technical fees, and re-investment of repatriation dividend is treated as new foreign investment.

Fiscal incentives

- Tax holiday for five years for developed areas; seven years for less developed areas, nine years for least developed areas and 12 years for the special economic zone.
- 15 per cent import duty on capital machinery for industries in developed areas, 7.5 per cent duty for less developed areas and 2.5 per cent for least developed areas.
- 2.5 per cent duty on imported capital machinery for selective industries using 70 per cent or more of indigenous raw materials and for 70 per cent export oriented industry irrespective of their location.
- Accelerated depreciation from 80 per cent to 100 per cent is allowed. Depreciation allowance can be carried forward if the unit sustains loss.
- Exemption of tax on interest on foreign loans.

- Exemption of tax on royalty, technical know-how and technical assistance fees.
- Liberal investment allowance for tax assessment.
- Relief from double taxation for foreign investors.

Other incentives include: Tariff protection up to four years to deserving industries; suppliers' credit under approved terms; availability of long term credit facilities from industrial financing institutions; income tax exemption to foreign technicians employed in approved industries for a period of three years; remittance of 50 per cent of the salary of foreign nationals; remittance of saving from retirement benefits and personal assets of individuals on retirement or termination of service; and joint venture companies with capital upto US\$1.65 million need not issue public shares. For those above this amount it is also not required at the initial stage.

In selective cases the government will provide guarantees for foreign loans provided a counter guarantee is given to the government from a bank and a foreign investment company can borrow working capital from local banks.

Additional incentives for exporters: Loan upto 90 per cent of the value of letter of credit for commercial banks for export-oriented industries; lower interest rate (presently 9 per cent) on pre-shipment and packing credit; income tax rebate upto 60 per cent on export of non-traditional items; Export Credit Guarantee Scheme; and rebate of 25 per cent on excise duty on additional production if such unit produces more than 100 per cent sanctioned capacity.

Bangladesh offers a substantial manpower reserve of skilled, unskilled workers. The availability of an inexpensive, trained and easily trainable labour force permits industrial production at a comparatively low cost.

The government has undertaken a large scale privatisation programme. During the last few years remarkable progress has been accomplished. As many as

558 industrial units have been divested to the private sector. To further gear up the privatisation process off-loading of shares of public sector enterprises has been taken up. Public sector corporations have been converted into 'holding corporations' and industrial enterprises into public limited companies. Shares of 49 industrial enterprises have been offered for public subscription of which 15 per cent are reserved for the employees, retaining 51 per cent shares with holding corporation.

Bangladesh has also established export processing zones (EPZ) at Chittagong and will soon have another EPZ at Dhaka. The industries in EPZs enjoy special fiscal incentives and other infrastructural facilities. 100 per cent foreign investment is allowed in the EPZ. In EPZ, tax free import is permissible and there is tax holiday for 10 years.

Small and cottage industries: The government has given priority to small and cottage industries. Investment upto a US\$5 million falls in the small industries sector. For the development of small and cottage industries:

Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC) provides all assistance to entrepreneurs including training facility, appraisal of projects and marketing.

The following special incentives and facilities are provided to small and cottage industries:

- Financial institutions and banks shall have a separate window for financing such industries.
- The financial institutions and banks should set apart a definite percentage of their resources for the development of SCI.
- Debt-equity ratio for SCI shall be 80:20 in order to provide support to the small entrepreneurs.
- A small entrepreneurs Credit Guarantee Scheme may be introduced under the joint sponsorship of BSCIC and Sadharan Bima Corporation.
- Small and cottage industries located in less and least developed areas shall be entitled

to income tax rebate on production.

Board of Investment. To facilitate expeditious implementation of private sector industrial projects and also to provide assistance and operational services to the private sector industries, government has recently established a Board of Investment. The Board of Investment, a high powered body headed by the President, will provide one-stop service under one roof, which means the entrepreneurs will not be required to go from one government office to another for various types of facilities.

Opportunities

At present Bangladesh offers investment opportunity in the following areas: export oriented industry in textile, toys, electronics, leather goods etc; chemical and petrochemical industry based on natural gas; finished leather, leather goods and luggage industry, shrimp cultivation, hatchery; agro-based industry, textile yarn and clothing.

At its present stage of economic development, Bangladesh needs and welcomes foreign capital to accelerate the pace of industrial growth. Bangladesh has established an economic and political atmosphere for foreign investment with necessary legal protection, administrative reorganisation, simplification of procedures with attractive incentive package. Our developed infrastructure and abundance of adaptable workforce combined with technology and capital from abroad will permit production at low cost. The country with a population of 110 million people has a vast expanding market.

A number of multinational companies have been operating in Bangladesh for many years and as a result of the Bangladesh government's liberal industrial policies; many foreign entrepreneurs are now investing in Bangladesh.

Biman flies east and west

BIMAN, the national carrier of Bangladesh, has recently introduced new routes to Sharjah, Frankfurt and the Far East.

Sharjah in the UAE was added to the routes in October. The city is the 25th international destination covered by Biman. The maiden flight to Sharjah was formally seen off at the Zia International Airport. On arrival, a Biman crest was presented to Sheikh Abdullah Bin Al Thani, the chairman of the Sharjah International Airport.

A high level Biman delegation, led by its managing director M. Shaikat-ul-Islam, went on the inaugural flight.

Biman now operates to three destinations in the UAE, including Sharjah, and ten in the Gulf and the Middle East. There are two flights a week to Sharjah, one on Dhaka-Sharjah-Frankfurt-London route and the other on Dhaka-Baghdad-Kuwait-Sharjah-Dhaka route.

The ruler of Sharjah Sheikh Maktum-al-Maktum received the Biman delegation during their stay for the inauguration ceremony of Biman flights to Sharjah.

In the winter schedule, which came into effect on Oct 29,

Biman flights to Baghdad were resumed. The resumption of flights took place on Nov 2 after an absence of two years. In the winter schedule, Biman will operate once a week flight to Baghdad.

Biman is the only airline operating a direct flight between Sharjah and Frankfurt. Biman is second to Gulf airlines in operating direct flights to Heathrow from Sharjah. Other airlines operating through Sharjah go to London's Gatwick Airport.

Before flying to Sharjah, most of the West-bound Biman flights operated through Dubai. Biman spokesmen say that if the routing is found commercially viable, Biman might opt for diverting two more flights to Sharjah which presently land at other airports in the vicinity on technical grounds. If this happens, Biman will save a huge amount of foreign exchange on landing and parking charges, besides enjoying traffic rights at Sharjah.

Schedule

The winter schedule also marks the commencement of Biman's fourth frequency to London under an air transport agreement recently signed between Bangladesh and the UK.

New routes in the Far East

were also introduced by Biman after Bangladesh and Thailand signed an air services agreement. There are seven scheduled flights a week by both Biman and Thai Airlines between Dhaka and Bangkok.

The agreement was signed at the Biman headquarters in Dhaka by M.G. Kibria, joint secretary, Bangladesh Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism Srisook Chandrasu, director-general of the Ministry of Civil Aviation of Thailand.

Under the agreement, the two sides will meet sometime next year to review and update the air services arrangements. There is a possibility to expand the facilities. At present, Biman operates six flights a week to Bangkok and Thai Airlines operates five flights a week.

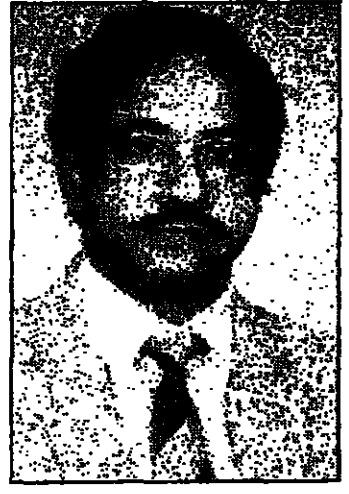
Biman sources said the national carrier will try to operate flights to Hong Kong, Manila and Tokyo via Bangkok. At present, Dragonair of Hong Kong flies twice a week to Dhaka and Bangladesh has the right to operate three flights a week to Hong Kong. Biman is also trying to get permission to operate two flights a week to Tokyo. Presently, it can operate only one flight a week to the Japanese capital.

Comprehensive report of Kuwait station during the period June, 1988 to July, 1989

Sales performance

Passenger: During the period we have carried 7.58 per cent more passengers than the same period of the last fiscal year. During this fiscal year we have carried 8,617 passengers while 8,011 passengers were carried during the last fiscal year.

If compared with our direct competitor Kuwait Airways, during the period we have carried 8,617 revenue passengers by 52 flights whereas Kuwait Airways carried 15,910 revenue passengers by 104 flights.



Abdul Hai Bhuiyan, Biman's manager in Kuwait.

This figure shows that we carried an average of 166 passengers per flight while Kuwait Airways carried an average 152 per flight only, though Kuwait Airways carries almost 50 per cent passengers from different Middle East, USA and European points to Dhaka via Kuwait.

Cargo: As there are no export commodities from Kuwait, all our cargo shipment are unaccompanied baggage of passengers to Dhaka. During the period we have carried 90,969 kg of cargo in comparison to 64,120 kg in the last year by which we have carried 41.87 per cent more cargo than the same period of last year.

Excess baggage: During the period we have carried 91,456 kg of excess baggage in comparison to 82,962 kg in the last year by which we have carried 10.23 per cent more excess baggage uplifted than same period last year.

Population policy Measures to curb growth

By Mansoor ul Karim

Bangladesh, with an estimated population of about 102.9 million in 1986 is the eighth most populous country in the world with a land area of 55,598 square miles. The population is now increasing at the rate of estimated 2.3 per cent per year. If this growth rate continues, the population of Bangladesh will double again in thirty years time. The unfavourable age structure and the large number of women in the reproductive age group will continue to have higher reproductive potential. The present level of population with over 40% of the total population below the age of 15 years and a high growth rate, threatens the aspiration for social and economic growth, desired standard of living, improvement in health condition and welfare of the family at large.

The government of Bangladesh has recognised this problem and considered that moderation of fertility level would improve the socio-economic conditions of the country, as well as individual well being. The Government has declared "population explosion" as the number one problem and determined to do all that is possible under the prevailing circumstances to check the high growth rate of population within the shortest possible time. Since mid-sixties, Government has been trying to attach the fertility situation through a number of programmatic measures. The population programme in this country, has undergone a series of evolutionary changes in terms of its organisational structure, programmatic strategy and goals aimed at reducing fertility to a level commensurate with the country's development need.

Policy

The current family planning programme in Bangladesh is a broad based multidimensional programme and is integrated with health services at Upazila level and below to provide a package of family planning, Primary Health Care, Immunization and MCH services to the people with the ultimate objectives of achieving NRR (Net Reproduction Rate) and minimum health care for all by the year 2000 A.D. The National Council for Population Control (NCCP) headed by the President of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, provides policy guidelines, directives, strategies and measures as required from time to time.

The Third Five Year Plan (1985-90) aims at reducing the existing birth rate to 1.8% by 1990, by raising the present contraceptive prevalence of 29.8 per cent to 40 per cent.

The implementation strategies for achieving the goals includes among others:

- (a) Integration of health and MCH, F.P. services delivery system at the grassroot level.
- (b) Provision of a wide variety of contraceptive choices on voluntary basis.
- (c) Adoption of multisectoral approach for creating an environment conducive to small family norm, and lower fertility.
- (d) Enlistment of community support and greater participation of non-Government agencies.
- (e) Development of manpower through intensive and extensive training programme.
- (f) Strengthen and augment research and evaluation capacity.
- (g) Introduction of system of

community award etc. Family Planning in Bangladesh is a voluntary measure for responsible planned parenthood. The Government respects and upholds individual freedom for choosing a particular method of contraception as a matter of right to space child birth and to limit the size of the family. The programme has recently gained further momentum with the decentralization of administrative functions from 1982 to upazilas and the establishment of representative local government. Here health and MCH family planning policies and programmes and plans are coordinated and implemented with the participation by the community and grassroots organisations.

Profile of Bangladesh

Area: 1,43,998 sq. km.
Location: Between 20°34' to 26°38' latitude and 88°01' to 92°00' longitude having common borders with Indian on 3 sides east, west and north with Burma and Bay of Bengal at the south-east.
Climate: During summer (March-Nov) it fluctuates from 20 to 40 Celsius.
National airlines: Biman, Bangladesh Airlines.
Main crops: Paddy, jute and tea.
Capital: Dhaka.
Port cities: Chittagong and Mongla.
Population: 100 million (approx.).
Language: Bangla and English.
Currency: Taka.

ই ডিসেম্বর তুমি আমায় অবাক কর

XX

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Six seasons

Changing seasons, varying colours

WHEN the "Krishnachuras" start blooming and the stars blink on a breezy night, it is time for spring in Bangladesh. A breath of fresh southerly wind invigorates the mind and the body. One speaks of the full moon and of "going to the forests." Most of the trees have shaken up from their winter slumber and some have sprouted fresh leaves.

The Siberian ducks are still on the innumerable ponds, lakes and canals, preparing to return home. The local birds are spreading their wings. The inertia of winter is gone. This is time for rejuvenation.

Spring which officially starts on the first of the Bengali month of Falgun brings about a magical change in the environment. It is not only the trees and the birds which welcome the advent of the "season of rebirth," but also the people. Spring festivities or "Basant Utsav" are a part of the tradition and culture of the people in Bangladesh.

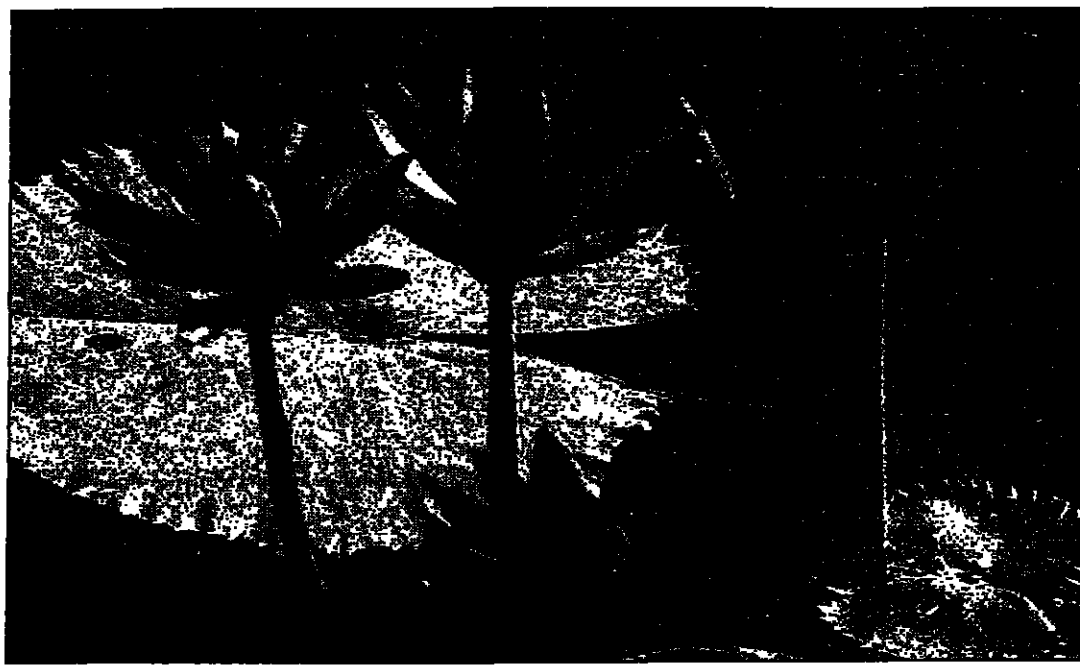
Colour

It is the season of colour. The women wear saffron saris to welcome the season of youth. The colour matches with the mood of the time. As part of the festivities, fairs are held in the villages and towns and there are carnivals in many parts of the country. Spring stretches into the month of "Chaitra" when the season becomes drier and the skies clearer. The "Krishnachuras" also become brighter and their scarlet colour spreads all over.

Spring quietly gives way to summer as the month of Baishak comes and heralds the new year. It is also the season of storms with the winds becoming wild and changing their direction. The *Kal Baishakhi* as storms are called blow away houses, pull down trees and sometimes ravage the rice paddies whipping waves in the so long peaceful rivers.

Storm

The white fluffy clouds of spring replaced by dark ominous formations in the horizon. They bring rain on the parched fields. The people come out in thousands to welcome the new year and the rain. The farmers



The six seasons in Bangladesh are distinct and go on in an eternal cycle. The land is rejuvenated and the spirit of the people is reborn. The seasonal cycle has become a part of the culture of the country, writes Ahmad Fazal.



look to the sky for the water laden grey clouds which also ends the spell of drought and prepares the ground for planting a new crop.

Despite the storms, the people take the advent of the year in stride. In the cities and town, the new Bengali year is welcomed with songs and dances. In Dhaka, men, women and children go to the parks early morn-

ing where poems are recited and songs are sung in a new ceremonial welcome of the new year. *Naba Barsha* as the new year is called brings hopes for all.

The temperature soars in summer but occasionally as the mercury rises, the rain comes down, drenching the land and cooling the environment.

Summer is also the season of "mellow fruitfulness." As the

month of "Jaistha" arrives, the mangoes ripe, the jack fruits hanging by the hundred from sprawling trees grow juicier and the ripe black berries start falling as if from the sky.

Then there are fruits like the litchis, the bananas and the different kinds of wild succulent berries. The departing melons still remain in the market as do the papayas continuing to add to

the diversity.

The heat of the summer is driven off with the arrival of the rains. The "Barsha" begins with the month of "Ashar" and continues into the following month of "Sraban." This is the peak of the monsoon in Bangladesh, the rains come down in torrents and they flood the paddies. The rivers burst their banks and often wash away people's homes. Even the meandering rivulets have gurgling currents as the water gush through their channels.

There is a special beauty in these two months. This is created not only by the rains but also by the flowers which bloom and the purity of the greenness which surrounds everything. The poets in Bangladesh as well as the painters have always been charmed by the season's subdued shades. Countless poems have been written on the season of the rains and these are mostly romantic compositions.

Rains in Bangladesh are associated with love, romance and the purity of the soul. It has also a spiritual undertone which the works of Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore reflect.

The rivers dance with the rains buffeting the boats. The boatman sings and on the bank, a solitary young woman pines in her loneliness. There is mysticism in the season.

Harvest

Then the rains peter out and *Sarat* or early autumn arrives. The trees are greener in the month of *Bhadra* when the rains become intermittent. The light is more subdued in the month of *Ashwin* while the rivers are still in spate. The temperatures have also come down and the crops get ready for harvest.

Sarat leads the way to *Hemanta* or autumn. The colours of the leaves of many trees change with the advent of the month of *Kartik*. Some trees start to shed their leaves. The crops have been harvested and the farmers are ready for another round of festivities. In *Agrahayan* the harvest enters the farmer's store house. The smoke coming out of the thatched huts in the village show that the rice is being "parboiled" and processed for the market.



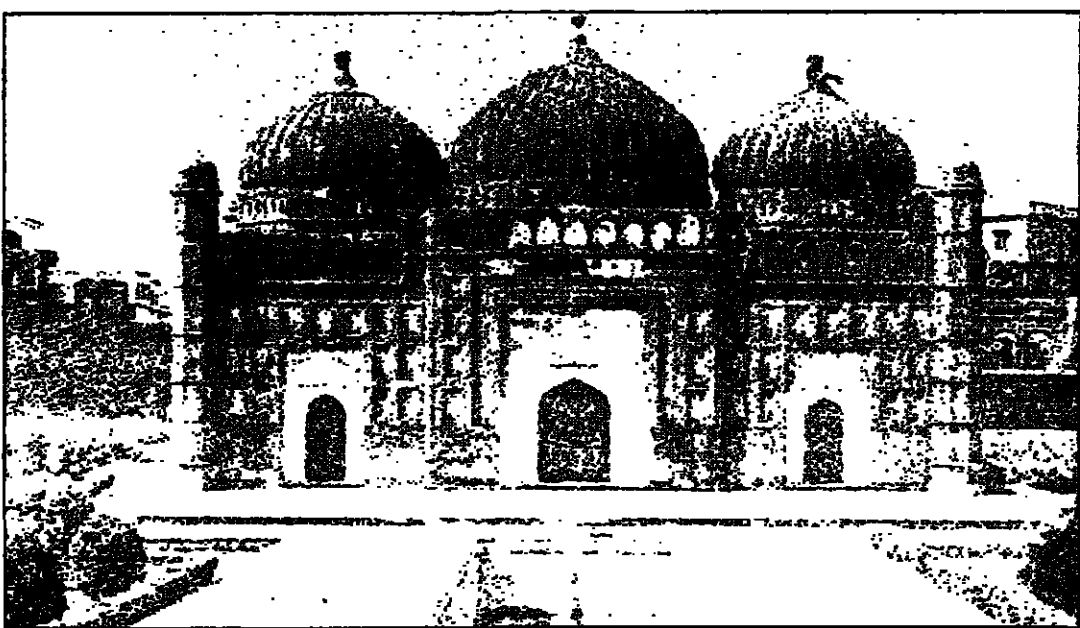
Vitality of Islamic architecture

SINCE the emergence of the Muslim community in Bangladesh at the dawn of the 13th century A.D., new cities were built and the old ones reconstructed. These city-centres were adorned with mosques, mausolea, madrasahs, forts, palaces, gardens, bridges, roads, victory towers, gateways and such other religious and utilitarian structures. However, the mosques are, undoubtedly, the most numerous and remarkable among all the varieties of buildings produced during the eight centuries of Islam in Bangladesh. In fact, a typical landscape here is almost inconceivable without the presence of the mosque. The mosques in Bangladesh form a coherent group for their regional character of architectural forms, materials, techniques and decorations. In the broad spectrum of Islamic architecture, this unity of tradition has been somewhat difficult to perceive because of inadequate study of the subject.

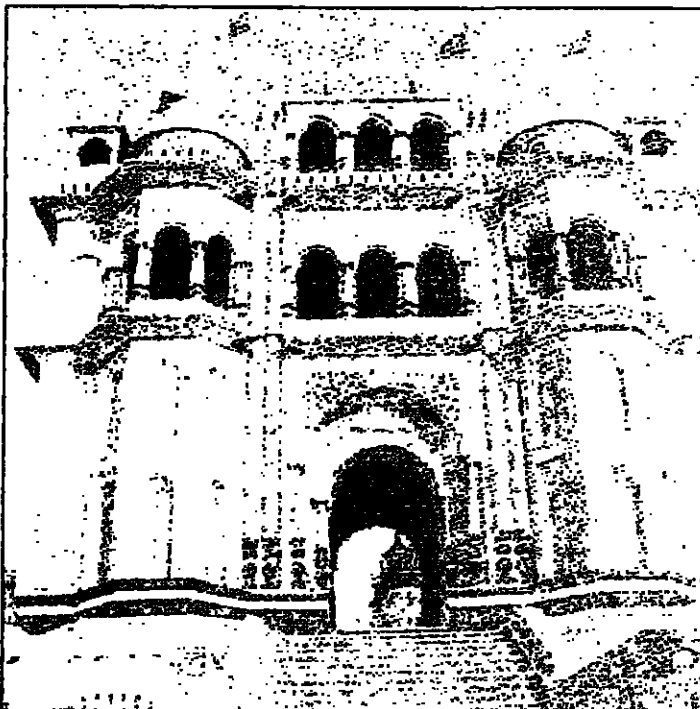
A random selection of mosques of present day Bangladesh highlight some aspects of the immense vitality and originality of the Islamic architectural tradition in this part of the world. The pioneering Muslims who established their rule in Bangladesh had already with them a highly developed architecture. Certain elements, such as the arch, dome, minaret and mihrab, were already recognised as the distinguishing features of Islamic architecture. Through an experience of more than half a millennium. Notwithstanding the facts that Bangladesh received and absorbed Muslim immigrants from various parts of the Central and West Asia along with their ideas, artistic views and technology, the regional Bengali elements of contemporary monumental traditions as expressed in the pre-Muslim Buddhist and Hindu architecture largely retained their utility. The resultant fusion after 'adoption and adaptation' happily appeared to be at once Islamic and Bengali.

Except a few examples of recent origin, perhaps no courtyard type of mosque was built within the present bounds of Bangladesh. The heavy monsoon obliged the acceptance of the enclosed type of building without courtyard. The humid climate also contributed to the evolution of the striking curvilinear roof-forms derived from typical rural thatched bamboo huts of Bangladesh.

From the standpoint of architectural planning of the



Above: Lalbagh Jame-e-Masjid, built in 1680 AD; below: gateway of Qadam Rasul Mosque (18th century).



mosques the Bengali architects and masons had rather untrained freedom to resort to a wide variety of ground plans. The square or rectangular mosques offered further variations by the number of domes and aisles. The addition of a verandah or an annex or annexes, or their absence, would also contribute to their importance. A cursory glance over the extent mosque with a single dome and a verandah, square mosque with nine domes and triple aisles, rectangular mosque with three domes and single aisle,

rectangular mosque with three domes, single aisle and annexes, rectangular mosque with five domes, single aisle and annexes, rectangular mosque with six domes and double aisles, rectangular mosque with ten domes and double aisles, rectangular mosque with nine domes and triple aisles, rectangular mosque with twenty-eight domes and triple aisles, rectangular mosque with fifteen domes and triple aisles, rectangular mosque with five domes and triple aisles, rectangular mosque with seventy-seven domes and seven aisles and

many other architectural combinations.

The mosques in Bangladesh, as in cases of other areas of building art, had mainly three phases of development. The first phase began with the initial Muslim conquest and continued throughout the few centuries of semi-independent viceroys of the Delhi Sultans and, thereafter, the independent Sultans of Bangladesh, till 1576 AD. The second phase was co-existent with the Mughal rule when this region was annexed as a part of the north-Indian empire. The last phase began with the decline of the Mughals and the Europeans taking a firmer foothold in the middle of the 18th century.

The transition of the Muslims from the 19th to the 20th century in Bangladesh saw them at the lowest of their prosperity. The aftermath of the First World War instilled a new determination among the Bengali Muslims. The long march of Bangladesh had already started. The Muslims in this part of the world, now known as Bangladesh dreamed of a separate homeland. Ultimately, the British were forced to leave in 1947 after acquiescing economically and politically unworkable 2-segmented Pakistan, curved out of Hindu dominated British India. After two decades, the chapter of exploration was brought to an end finally in 1971 with the sacrifice of innumerable lives in the War of Liberation. Bangladesh was born and the freshly owned independence created a new impetus to again undertake different types of building activities.

By Dr Enamul Haque



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SPORTS

Foreman, Cooney take on children

NEW YORK, Dec 15, (AP): There stood George Foreman, holding a snooty and a balloon twisted to look like a duck.

"Nice dog, George," a man said.

Foreman smiled and quickly put the stuffed animal behind his back.

In another part of the cafeteria stood a grinning Gerry Cooney. On Jan 15, Foreman and Cooney will square off in a 12-round bout at Atlantic City in a ring surrounded by sceptics and people rooting for them to take each other's head off. On Wednesday, they were surrounded by kids, balloons and animals.

There was a band playing "Jingle Bells" and "White Christmas" and a clown with a red nose and a huge hammer, which had the size but not the weight of the kind used by boys trying to impress their girlfriends by ringing the bell at carnivals.

Foreman, a 41-year-old former heavyweight champion, and Cooney, a 35-year-old former heavyweight contender, happily met a bunch of underprivileged kids at Macy's "Operation happy children."

It didn't matter to the 6-foot-4, 250-pound (193-centimetre, 113-kilogramme) Foreman and the 6-7, 235-pound (201 centimetre, 107-kilogramme) Cooney that they ranked behind the stuffed animals in the minds of the children.

"I feel like a kid again," Cooney said. "You come here and see the expressions on these kids' faces. I have a son, who's 12 months old (Christopher Gerald)."

Good

"Anytime in the year anybody wants you to do something for children, it makes you feel good," said Foreman, who is the father of eight children ranging in age from 22 months to 16 years. Asked to address the gathering, Foreman stood in front of a small group of adults and said, "Where are all the children? I'm going to the children."

He did.

Foreman, who became an evangelist after retiring following a decision loss to Jimmy Young on March 17, 1977, said he began a comeback in 1987 to make money to support his youth centre at Houston.

"I plan to open a second centre the middle of next year," said Foreman, whose comeback now extends through 19 straight victories, 18 by knockout. The quality of his opposition has been such that Cooney will be his first opponent whose name is known outside his own household.

Cooney has fought four times for a total of less than 12 full rounds, since his knockout loss in a title bid against Larry Holmes in 1982. It will be his first fight since he was knocked out in the fifth round by Michael Spinks on June 15, 1987.

Yet Cooney will get \$2 million and Foreman will get \$1.5 million because there is a certain pro wrestling-vaudeville appeal to the match, and the state of the heavyweight division is such that the winner could get a shot at champion Mike Tyson.

Hodkinson wins

KIRBY, England, Dec 15, (Reuters): Briton Paul Hodkinson retained his European featherweight title on Wednesday with a devastating eighth round stoppage of Frenchman Farid Benadjeb.

Hodkinson dominated the contest and the only surprise was that the challenger did not buckle sooner.

Sidhu misses century by three runs

Pakistan, India draw final Test

SIALKOT, Pakistan, Dec 15, (Reuters): The India-Pakistan cricket series ended in a 0-0 stalemate yesterday after a fighting 97 by Navjot Sidhu earned the Indians an honourable draw in the fourth and final game.

The five-day match was called off at tea on the final day with India 234 for seven in their second innings, leading by 308.

All four matches ended in a draw, a disappointing outcome to a series where fans had hoped for better things.

India's other hero yesterday was teenager Sachin Tendulkar who scored a defiant 57. Sloppy catching and fielding did little to further the Pakistan cause, however.

Sidhu was dropped twice, once shortly after the start of play, and later when on 64.

The Indians began the day at 102 for four with Sidhu, declared Man of the Match, on 54 and Tendulkar on 33.

They defied the Pakistan bowlers for 100 minutes and put on an invaluable 101 for the fifth

wicket before Tendulkar was caught off Imran Khan shortly before lunch.

The 16-year-old batted with a maturity far beyond his years and handled the Pakistan attack like a seasoned campaigner.

Pakistan's other successes came in the afternoon session with the wickets of Kapil Dev and Sidhu.

Kapil was trapped leg before by pace bowler Zakir Khan for 27 and the same bowler also accounted for Sidhu, who was

caught by Imran at deep gully after spending 347 minutes at the crease, hitting 13 fours.

Imran was clearly disappointed with the series. "We did not achieve anything of significance during the four Tests. Rather we discovered more of our weaknesses," he said.

"Our catching was worse and if we continue to drop catches in the same way we stand little chance of winning in Australia."

Pakistan go to Australia later this month for a three-Test series.

Imran said injuries to pace bowlers had been a factor in the Pakistan failure to force victory from a strong position in the first two Tests.

But he was very happy with the supervision of the series by two neutral English umpires John Holder and John Hampshire.

"Neutral umpiring was the main factor in achieving a controversy-free series. This was the best aspect of the rubber," he said.

Indian captain Krishnamachari Srikkanth was delighted with the series outcome. "No one gave us a chance when we left India a month ago. People talked of Pakistan winning by a 3-0 margin," he said.

"But we have drawn the series and in the final Test we were able to dictate the terms. I'm delighted at what the team effort has achieved."

Srikkanth felt more comfortable with neutral umpiring and said there should be neutral

officials in every series.

Of Tendulkar, he said: "He is a lovely bat and immensely gifted. He rose to the occasion in adverse circumstances and exhibited perfect temperament."

The two sides now play four one-day internationals, starting in Peshawar tomorrow.

Scoreboard

INDIA first innings 324 (S. Manjrekar 72, M. Azharuddin 52, Wasim Akram five for 101)

PAKISTAN first innings 250 (Rameez Raje 56, Vivek Razdan five for 79)

INDIA second innings (overnight 102 for four)

K. Srikkanth c Wasim Akram b Imran 3
N. Sidhu c Imran b Zakir 97
S. Manjrekar lbw b Imran 4
M. Azharuddin c Shoaib b Wasim Akram 4
R. Shastri lbw b Wasim Akram 0
S. Tendulkar c Nadeem b Imran 57
Kapil Dev lbw b Zakir 27
M. Prabhakar not out 11
K. More not out 17
Extras (b-5 lb-7 nb-2) 14
Total (for seven wickets) 234
Fall of wickets: 1-102-333-384-385-138-6-188-7-207

Did not bat: Maninder Singh, Vivek Razdan.

Bowling: Wasim Akram 32-17-41-2, Imran Khan 22-4-68-3, Shoaib Mohammad 1-1-0-0, Waqar Younis 16-1-63-0, Zakir Khan 13-0-50-2.

Man of the Match: Navjot Sidhu
Result: match drawn. Four-Test series drawn 0-0.



Sidhu (left) and Tendulkar: played well on last day



Bayern draw PSV in quarterfinals

Milan to meet Mechelen

ZURICH, Dec 15, (Reuters): Bayern Munich and PSV Eindhoven, two of the giants of European club soccer, will clash head-on in the quarterfinals of this season's European Cup after being paired together at the draw today.

Bayern, three times winners of the competition, and the Dutch champions, who beat Benfica of Portugal on penalties in the 1988 final, both have formidable domestic records in recent years but both may be relieved to have avoided holders AC Milan.

The Italians drew Mechelen of Belgium, the 1988 Cup Winners Cup champions, who will be out to make up for their defeat by another Italian side, Sampdoria, in the semifinals of the same competition last season.

In the other two ties, French champions Marseille face Bulgarian C.F.K.A. Sofia while Benfica play Dnepropetrovsk of the Soviet Union.

In the Cup Winners Cup, Sampdoria, who

lost to Barcelona in last year's final, have a straightforward-looking tie against Grasshoppers of Switzerland while Anderlecht and Monaco will also fancy their chances against Admira Wacker of Austria and Real Valladolid of Spain respectively.

The fourth tie is between Dinamo Bucharest, beaten on away goals at the same stage by Sampdoria last season, and Partizan Belgrade.

West Germany could conceivably claim three of the four semi-final spots in the UEFA Cup after the draw kept Cologne, Werder Bremen and Hamburg apart, however, against Aachen, Liege and Juventus respectively with Fiorentina meeting Auxerre of France in the remaining match.

Quarterfinal draws:
European Cup: C.F.K.A. Sofia (Bulgaria) v Marseille (France)

Mechelen (Belgium) v AC Milan (Italy)
Bayern Munich (West Germany) v PSV Eindhoven (Netherlands)
Benfica (Portugal) v Dnepropetrovsk (Soviet Union)

Cup Winners Cup:
Sampdoria (Italy) v Grasshoppers (Switzerland)
Real Valladolid (Spain) v Monaco (France)
Dinamo Bucharest (Romania) v Partizan Belgrade (Yugoslavia)
Anderlecht (Belgium) v Admira Wacker (Austria)

UEFA Cup:
Fiorentina (Italy) v Auxerre (France)
Cologne (West Germany) vs Antwerp (Belgium)
Liege (Belgium) vs Werder Bremen (West Germany)
Hamburg (West Germany) vs Juventus (Italy)

Mercury Bay return to court

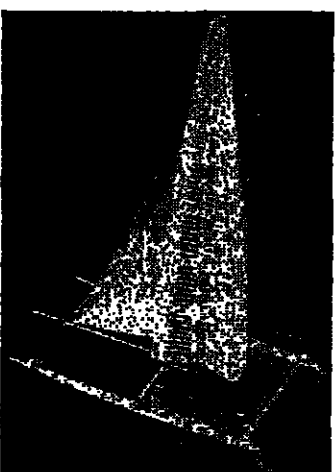
NEW YORK, Dec 15, (Reuters): New Zealand's Mercury Bay Boating Club went to court yesterday in another bid to have the San Diego Yacht Club disqualified as the winner of the America's Cup, yachting's most prestigious prize.

Attorneys for Mercury Bay filed a long-expected appeal asking New York State's Court of Appeals to overrule a state Supreme Court decision reinstating San Diego as the winner of the September, 1988 Americas Cup racing series.

The issue revolves around San Diego's use of a catamaran for the first time in the 132-year-old series.

Mercury Bay won a state supreme court ruling last March by Justice Carmen Ciparick disqualifying San Diego for sailing the catamaran against New Zealand's huge mono-bullied sloop, San Diego's catamaran, Stars and Stripes, won easily, 2-0 in waters off San Diego.

But last September, the



Stars and Stripes: the catamaran which won easily

appeal division of the New York State Supreme Court reinstated San Diego as the winner, saying Ciparick was wrong in her interpretation of the deed of gift — the document which sets out the rules of competition for the

trophy. The appellate court said the deed did not prohibit the use of a catamaran.

Michael Fay, owner of the New Zealand yacht which lost the series, had issued a challenge to San Diego saying he would use a high-tech, 132-foot (40.2-metre) sloop far bigger than the yachts used in the previous 30 years.

San Diego retaliated with a much faster catamaran which skims over the water rather than ploughing through like a sloop.

Both sides have agreed to expedite the court proceedings with a view towards holding another America's Cup series in 1992.

Oral arguments are expected to be heard on February 8.

A spokesman for the San Diego America's Cup organising committee, Tom Mitchell, said yesterday he expects a decision by April 1.

"We expect to win this case and we expect to hold an event in 1992."

Canadian TV apologises to Carl Lewis

TORONTO, Dec 15, (Reuters): A Canadian cable television network has apologised for repeating allegations made in the West German news magazine Stern that US Olympic sprint champion Carl Lewis took banned body-building steroid drugs.

TSN, the Canadian sports network, said at the start of its peak hour "Sports Page" programme on Wednesday that the comments, "... were based on allegations made about Carl Lewis in a recent article published in Stern magazine."

"The TSN and Sports Page panelist Bill Walters regret that these allegations were repeated and wish to apologise and make it clear that they have no evidence to support these allegations."

Lewis is suing Stern over the article by Darrell Robinson, a former US 400 metres champion now living in Toronto.

Lewis' lawyer, Timothy Danson, said a statement of claim against Stern will probably be lodged in the Supreme Court of Ontario. "He has served notice that he is going to defend his reputation and he has the guts to do it," Danson said.



Sapre and Bastiere triumph

JAYASAPRE and Clara Bastiere won the SAS Bridge Tournament, sponsored by 7-Up at the SAS Hotel recently.

Sapre and Bastiere finished the event ahead of Lollo Murdwaine and Nahla Akel, who took second place.

Third place in the tournament went to Dona Materny and Bianca Moussali.

The tournament was directed by Dona Materny. She was assisted by Bianca Moussali. Materny thanked the sponsors, 7-Up, for their assistance in making the tournament a success.

The SAS Ladies Bridge Club also announced that it would hold another tournament, sponsored by Tanagra, tomorrow at the SAS Hotel. The tournament will start at 9.00am. Above and right: some of the participants during play.



Australia to ask Fina to ratify Housman's mark



Housman gives a victory salute after breaking the record. (Reuters wirephoto).

ADELAIDE, Australia, Dec 15, (Reuters): Australian swimming's governing body said yesterday it would ask the sport's rulers to ratify the 1,500 metres freestyle world record denied Glen Housman by a technical malfunction.

Housman, 18, on Wednesday became only the second man ever to break the 15-minute barrier in swimming's longest race in heats at Australia's Commonwealth Games trials, but the automatic timing system failed to register his finishing touch.

Faster

Hand-held stop-watches clocked him at 14 minutes 53.59 seconds, 1.17 seconds faster than the world record set by Soviet legend Vladimir Salnikov in Moscow in February 1983.

Australian swimming executive director Craig McLatchey said expert advice was being taken and a submission would be sent to the International Swimming Federation (Fina) in the next 48 hours.

"We will be putting forward every possible argument," McLatchey said. "As far as we

are concerned, Glen Housman is the fastest man over 1,500 metres, but let's try to get him the piece of paper as well."

He conceded, however, there was little chance of Fina bending its rules and accepting the new mark. The federation accepts only electronic timings for world records.

Housman's coach Ian Findlay, furious when the news of Wednesday's technical hitch broke on Wednesday, predicted 24 hours later that Housman would break the record at January's Commonwealth Games in Auckland.

"The kid will break it again and again and again until his name is indelibly written in the record books as the man who sank Salnikov. This is just the beginning for the kid," he said.

Claims by officials that the swimmer, and not the equipment, was at fault lost credence yesterday when the timing equipment at the trials failed completely during two heats of the 50 metres freestyle.

"I personally believe it was an electronic malfunction and I'd like some answers," Findlay

said. "I'll certainly be taking legal advice."

"I did touch the wall," Housman blurted out, unprompted, at a news conference at his hotel yesterday's afternoon.

But the country kid from Rockhampton in central Queensland seems to have emerged relatively unscathed from the greatest disappointment of his career.

"I think if nothing comes of what Australian swimming is going to do I will just put it behind me," he said.

Dived

"I'm not going to let it get to me. I still have plenty of time left and I'm sure I can do it again in Auckland."

"But I was pretty low last night."

"When they told me I just dived in the pool and swam and swam."

"One minute I was on top of the world and then the bottom. I felt pretty bad."

"I took two sleeping tablets but I didn't get much sleep."

Drugs cast shadow over annual soccer game

LONDON, Dec 15, (Reuters): Colombia's drug war has cast a shadow over the annual clash between Europe's and South America's soccer champions which has had a quiet decade after being wracked by controversy in the 1960s and 1970s.

Atletico Nacional of Medellin, the central city that is base for one of Colombia's infamous drug cartels, take on AC Milan in the World Club Championship match in Tokyo on Sunday.

The Colombian champions, who make up the core of the national side which has reached the World Cup finals for the first time since 1962, have prepared for the prestige clash in a vacuum.

The vendetta murder of a referee a month ago brought to a halt all domestic soccer, including qualifying for the next edition of the Libertadores de America Cup, the continental club championship Nacional won this year.

The Intercontinental match was switched to the neutral ground of Tokyo in 1980 after gaining notoriety as perhaps the ugliest event on football's world calendar over 20 years of home-and-away finals.

AC Milan are no strangers to its dark history, having been involved in two of the very worst clashes, against Pele's Santos in 1963 and Carlos Bilardo's Estudiantes six years later.

The Italians lost a violent third match against the Brazilians 1-0 after each side had won their home leg 4-2. Santos defender Ismael was sent off for hitting Milan's Brazilian striker Amarildo but they clinched the title with a penalty.

AC Milan gained some measure of revenge over South America when they wrested the title from Estudiantes de La Plata in 1969.

The Argentine side had roughed up Manchester United's Bobby Charlton, George Best and Law on their way to the trophy the year before.

AC Milan were 3-0 up after the first leg at home but did not get their hands on the trophy on goal aggregate until the end of a bruising 2-1 defeat in Buenos Aires and some of the dirtiest play ever witnessed on a football field.

Argentine goalkeeper Alberto Poletti and defender Jorge Aguirre Suarez were banned for life.

The government of General Onganía held Milan's Argentine-born striker Nester Comin under arrest for several hours because he had not done his military service.

Glasgow Celtic came out of three clashes with Racing Club of Argentina in 1967 severely battered, while in the 1970s both John Cruyff's Ajax Amsterdam and Franz Beckenbauer's Bayern Munich agreed to play for the trophy only once despite qualifying as European champions three times each.

In the late 1970s the event turned into a meaningless affair between the South American champions and the European Cup runners-up who were not even held in 1975 and 1977.

The South Americans were on top with 10 wins to eight before the match was moved to Tokyo and they have tipped the balance even further in their favour since.

Milan's fellow Italians Juventus beat Argentina's Luis Diego Maradona's first club, on penalties in 1983, ending a five match winning sequence for South America.

Robson scores twice

England beat Yugoslavia

ENGLAND, Dec 15, (Reuters): Captain Bryan Robson scored twice to spur England to a 2-1 win over fellow World Cup finalists Yugoslavia on Wednesday.

Gary Lineker was fouled on the right in England's first attack and Robson rose unmarked above the cold Yugoslav defence to head home Chris Waddle's floated free kick after only 40 seconds.

Striker Haris Skoro equalised with a solo goal in the 17th minute as the Yugoslavs began to

gain control of midfield. He ran straight at goal from the halfway line and slipped through a static defence unsure who was supposed to pick him up to rifle a crisp shot past the diving Peter Shilton.

Robson scored the winner in the 69th minute when England, with two fresh substitutes on, launched a new wave of attacks.

Right back Paul Parker was involved in a one-two with Lineker and slipped between two

defenders to send in a low centre from the right which Steve Bull failed to take. But Robson, coming in behind at the far post, slotted the ball home.

Robson's goals, no doubt warmly welcomed by manager Bobby Robson, were England's first of the season after three scoreless draws. His opener was the fastest ever scored at Wembley.

The victory ended a worrying goal famine the manager had sought to end by fielding Bull alongside Lineker up front. But they owed more to the creative promptings of Waddle, the one player in the side with a continental club in contrast to the cosmopolitan Yugoslavs.

Yugoslavia, like England, unbeaten in their World Cup qualifying matches, were not at full strength with five of their predominantly foreign-based first string players absent.

While they were fresh, Yugoslavia, with the talented Dragan Stojkovic pulling the strings in a five-man midfield and only Bayern Munich striker Radmilo Mihajlovic roaming up front, held possession for long spells of the first half and greater commitment might have seen them embarrass the England defence more often.

Bull's best chance came five minutes before the break when he received the ball after a combination between Waddle and Robson, but Partizan Belgrade defender Predrag Spasic, who had kept a close eye on the striker all evening, blocked his shot. Skoro shot into the side net-

ting from close range three minutes into the second half and the Yugoslavs only had one more clear chance, substitute goalkeeper Dave Beasant saving point blank from Zoran Vulić five minutes from time.

England — Peter Shilton (Dave Beasant 45th minute) Paul Parker, Des Walker, Terry Butcher, Stuart Pearce (Tony Dorigo 45) Michael Thomas (David Platt 67), David Rocastle (Steve Hodge 67), Bryan Robson (Steve McMahon 75), Chris Waddle, Steve Bull, Gary Lineker.

Yugoslavia — Tomislav Ivkovic Vujadin Stanovkovic, Faruk Hadzibegovic, Zoran Vulić, Predrag Spasic (Gordan Petric 80) Safet Susic (Andrej Panadic 75), Dragoljub Brnovic (Robert Prosinecki 75), Dragan Stojkovic, Toni Savewski Haris Skoro, Radmilo Mihajlovic.

Manager Robson said of his captain: "On that performance there is no better player in the world. He is inspirational and to score two goals on top of that is unbelievable."

Yugoslav coach Ivica Osim said the difference between the two sides was that: "We did not punish mistakes as efficiently as England did."

We managed to contain the English attack, but Robson ran into spaces and we had no answer to that.

England played to their strengths and probably play the fastest football in Europe, but they will have problems against teams who are able to slow the game down better than we did."

Coach names Dutch squad

AMSTERDAM, Dec 15, (Reuters): Dutch coach Thijs Libregts has named Barcelona's Ronald Koeman and AC Milan's Frank Rijkaard and Marco van Basten in his squad for a friendly with Brazil next week but all three may be unavailable.

Dutch newspapers said Barcelona coach Johan Cruyff is demanding Koeman take a break from soccer, while the AC Milan duo may not be available as they are playing Colombia's Atletico Nacional in the World Club Championship in Tokyo on Sunday.

The 20-man Dutch squad for the game will be whittled down to a final party of 16 at the weekend. Two other notable absentees are AC Milan's Ruud Gullit and PSV Eindhoven's Gerald Vanenburg, both out with long-term knee injuries.

Squad: Hans van Breukelen, Joop Hiele Danny Blind, Adrie van Tugelen, Ronald Koeman, Frank Rijkaard, Henk Fraser, Edward Sturing Berry van Aerle, Aron Winter, Jan Wouters, Frans van Rooy, Rob Reekers, Pieter Huistra John van't Schip, John van Loen, Marco van Basten, Bart Latuberu, Wim Kieft, Juul Ellerman.



W.German team

Austrian songwriter Udo Juergens (at the piano) and members of the West German soccer team go through rehearsal of the national team's song for next year's World Cup finals in Italy. (Reuters wirephoto)

Spain edge Switzerland

SANTA CRUZ DE TENERIFE, Dec 15, (Reuters): Local boy Felipe Minambres marked his debut with a goal as Spain beat Switzerland 2-1 in a World Cup warm-up match in the Canary Island on Wednesday.

Spanish coach Luis Suarez, whose team face a tough start in Italy with games against Uruguay and Belgium, experimented with three new players including Tenerife's Minambres who scored the 60th minute winner.

Michel Gonzalez put the hosts ahead from the penalty spot two minutes before half-time but Adrian Knup equalised two minutes after the interval.

Both teams found the going tough on a pitch made sticky by rain at the Heliodoro Rodriguez Stadium in Santa Cruz. But the young and inexperienced Swiss team showed a marked improvement under their new West German coach Uli Stielike but were hindered by weak finishing.

Former Real Madrid star Stielike replaced Marc Hottiger with Harald Gaemperle in the second half but the coach was then sent off for distracting the referee in making the substitutions.

Spain, who have never been beaten by the Swiss in 16 games, did not stage a serious attack until the 24th minute.

Francisco Villaroya took a pass from captain Emilio Butragueno just outside the

Swiss box but pressure hit the

Swiss side.

Spain took the lead in the 43rd minute after Swiss defender Herbert Baumann elbowed aside Manolo Sanchis in the penalty area and Real Madrid's Michel converted from the spot.

Adrian Knup equalised in the

47th minute, heading past goal-

keeper Andoni Zubizarreta from a

free-kick by Alain Sutter, but second-half substitute Minambres struck just 15 minutes into his debut, chipping the ball neatly over goalkeeper Martin Brunner's head to wrap up the tie.



Gonzalez got the first goal for Spain



Robson got both the goals for England

Norwich to face Derby

LONDON, Dec 15, (Reuters): Two of the English League's less fashionable clubs, Norwich City and Derby County, have a rare chance to divert attention away from their more glamorous rivals when they play each other tomorrow.

Normally, Liverpool's visit to Chelsea or Manchester United's home game against Tottenham would take centre stage but, for once, the two sides with the most formidable recent records in the First Division are to be found outside the big cities, playing at Norwich.

Derby have won six and drawn one of their last seven games, scoring 20 goals and conceding two, while Norwich have won four and lost one of theirs, six, scoring ten and conceding two. Norwich are now fourth in the table, five points behind leaders Arsenal with Derby three points further back in seventh place.

"On the face of it there couldn't be a better place to be on Saturday," said Derby striker Paul Goddard, who has shared 27 goals with partner Dean Saunders this season. "I must admit I didn't realise how good our recent record was and how good Norwich's was."

"You look around at our squad this year and we've got some good players. We finished fifth last season but I think we have got some good players. We finished fifth last season but I think we have grown up a lot since then. We had a hard start this year but we have really got it back now."

Derby's success has been reflected on the international arena. Mark Wright's form has earned him a return to the England squad and left back Mick Forsyth became the club's newest cap when he played for England B against Yugoslavia B on Tuesday.

Norwich, who were on the way to a League and F.A. Cup double last season, have bounced back after making headlines for the wrong reasons last month, when they were involved in a brawl at Arsenal.

"I don't think we're playing as well as we did last season yet," explained winger Dale Gordon. "But being up at the top of the League seems to be getting a little bit of a habit. I know we're a good side but I think we could be close to being a very good side — we just need a bit more consistency."

Arsenal's opponents Luton, who eased their financial worries by selling striker Roy Wegerle to Queens Park Rangers for £1 million (\$1.6 million) this week, are troubled by injury and suspension for their visit to Highbury.

Manager Ray Harford has also confirmed he has turned down a £400,000 (\$640,000) offer from Second Division Middlesbrough for midfielder Mick Kennedy.

It may also prove a searching weekend for Howard Kendall, Manchester city's new manager. He takes official charge of his side for the first time when the bottom club travel to Everton on Sunday.

Romario sharpens his skills

EINDHOVEN, Netherlands, Dec 15, (Reuters): Brazilian striker Romario de Faria Souza, the goal-scoring sensation of Dutch soccer, is eager to show his hosts just how much he has learnt from them when the two meet in Rotterdam next Wednesday.

The 23-year-old, who joined PSC Eindhoven from Vasco da Gama of Rio de Janeiro in October last year, has brought Brazilian flair to a league reeling from the exodus of world-class players such as Ruud Gullit, Marco van Basten and Ronald Koeman.

Romario says his own game has also grown up since he joined PSV. Dutch champions for the past four seasons.

"Since I came here I've learnt how to fight more for the ball. I've developed my running power and gained extra pace," he told Reuters. "I've become a more complete footballer."

"In Brazil, football is based so much on the skills of the individual. Here I have to work much harder in games and train harder because the style is a lot more physical," he said.

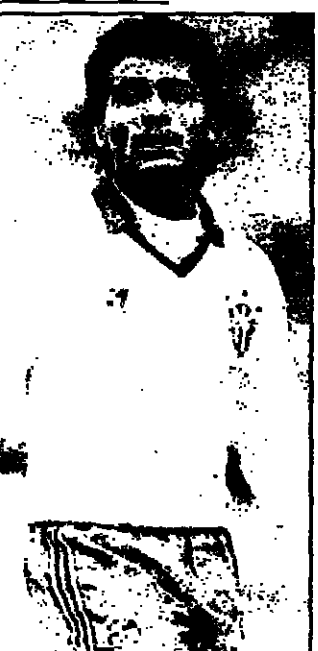
Brazil have never beaten the Dutch and Romario does not expect this to change next week, despite the absence of several Dutch players because of injury and club commitments.

"With the fans behind them and conditions they are used to they have a 70-80 per cent chance of winning," he said.

"They have four or five of the world's top players and play some of the world's most progressive soccer."

Romario, a short, stocky figure who allies powerful acceleration to supreme close control and dribbling skills, made his name as top scorer in the 1988 Olympic soccer tournament.

Shortly afterwards PSV bought him from Vasco da



Romario

Gama for \$2.8 million and he topped the Dutch scoring lists last season with 19 goals from 24 First Division matches. He is averaging a goal a game this season.

Like so many intuitive goal scorers, Romario has found difficulties fitting into a team pattern and these have been exacerbated by problems in adjusting to life in the Netherlands.

Romario, who lives with his wife in luxury PSV accommodation, says he has no problems with his teammates on the pitch but his lack of Dutch makes social life difficult.

He also speaks very little English and finds it hard to communicate even within PSV's multi-lingual team.

Last month the Dutch press reported a rift between him and senior PSV players including striker Wim Kieft and Danish midfielder Soren Lerby, who were apparently frustrated by the Brazilian's alleged selfishness on the field.

"I've not totally adapted to PSV's style yet because it was very different from what I was used to in Brazil. But with time I'm adjusting my game and fitting in better," he said.



Government Warning: Smoking is a major cause of cancer and diseases of the lungs, heart and arteries.

SPORTS

Kingdom, Quirot voted best athletes of 1989

MONTE CARLO, Dec 15, (Reuters): Track stars Roger Kingdom of the US and Ana Quirot of Cuba were voted the best male and female athletes of 1989 in a world-wide survey conducted by the International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF).

Kingdom, the double Olympic champion who set a world record of 12.92

seconds for the 110 metres hurdles in Zurich in August, totalling 1,857 points in a poll of athletics officials, statisticians and journalists, the IAAF announced at its annual gala dinner on Wednesday.

Men's runner-up on 1,575 was Said Aouita of Morocco, the world's greatest middle-distance runner, who won the IAAF's overall Grand Prix title for the

third time in four years.

Javier Sotomayor of Cuba, who set a world high jump record of 2.44 metres in San Juan in July, was third with 1,515 points.

Quirot, unbeaten in 33 successive races in the past three years, won the women's title with 1,731 points ahead of Romanian middle-distance runner Paula Ivan,

the world mile record holder, who totalled 1,656. American hurdler Sandra Farmer-Patrick was third on 1,072.

Kingdom's world record and Quirot's one minute 54.44 seconds victory in the World Cup women's 800 metres in Barcelona were voted the best individual performances of the year.

SPORTS BRIEFS

Charity match

EAST BERLIN, Dec 15, (Reuters): Soccer stars from East and West Germany will team up next year to play a benefit match against a "World XI" in Dresden.

Master beaten

LONDON, Dec 15, (Reuters): International chess master David Levy, who once bet he would not be defeated by a computer chess programme, lost each of his four games against the world chess champion computer programme known as DT yesterday.

Czech player

PRAGUE, Dec 15, (Reuters): Ivo Krmecik has become the first Czechoslovak soccer player to benefit from the country's new-found political freedom by joining West German club St Pauli.

Brazilian forward

ROME, Dec 15, (AP): Rome's sports daily Corriere dello Sport reported yesterday that Napoli has signed Brazilian forward Bebeto for the next season.

E. German star

HAMBURG, West Germany, Dec 15, (AP): West German soccer club Bayer Leverkusen will sign East German star Andreas Thom for three years, Leverkusen officials said yesterday.

Soccer player

LONDON, Dec 15, (AP): Roy Wegerle, the soccer player qualified to represent four countries, has chosen the United States ahead of England, Scotland and West Germany, press reports said yesterday.

Tennis ace

GENEVA, Dec 15, (AP): Bulgarian-born tennis ace Manuela Maleeva-Frangiari, ranked ninth in the world, will make her debut as a Swiss player next month, the Swiss Tennis Federation said yesterday.

Milan beaten

LONDON, Dec 15, (Reuters): Philips Milan, without injured American star Bob McAdoo, were beaten 84-73 by European basketball champions Jugoplastika Split in the men's Champions Clubs Cup yesterday.

Friendly match

ROME, Dec 15, (Reuters): The United States has withdrawn from a planned soccer friendly against World Cup hosts Italy as they were drawn to play them in next year's finals.

Rally threatened

PARIS, Dec 15, (Reuters): A diplomatic row between France and Libya could threaten this month's Paris-Dakar motor rally, French diplomatic sources said yesterday. Competitors were to land in Tripoli on Dec 28 and drive four stages on Libyan territory but Libya has cut shipping and communications links with France in a surprise move reflecting worsening political relations.

Soviet boxers

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico, Dec 15, (AP): World Boxing Council president Jose Sulaiman predicted Wednesday that the Soviets will dominate world heavyweight boxing in the 1990s, replacing the Americans who currently prevail in the sport.

Top promoter

LONDON, Dec 15, (UPI): Top boxing promoter Frank Warren yesterday appeared in public for the first time since the night he almost died after being shot by a mystery gunman.

Fenech recovering

SYDNEY, Australia, Dec 15, (AP): Three-time world boxing champion Jeff Fenech of Australia was yesterday recuperating at home after undergoing surgery to his right hand he hopes will save his career.

Beckel ahead

DUBLIN, Dec 15, (Reuters): West Germany's Martina Deckel swept into the lead for the first time in the Tenpin Bowling World Cup yesterday, showing the convincing form which earned her third place in the event two years ago.

Wilander rallies for win

Sweden take 1-0 Davis Cup lead



Wilander fought back after losing the first set

STUTTGART, West Germany, Dec 15, (Reuters): Mats Wilander extracted slow and tortured revenge on Carl-Uwe Steeb with a five-set victory today to give Sweden a 1-0 lead in their bid to win back the Davis Cup from West Germany.

Wilander, humiliated by Steeb in the opening rubber of last year's final in Gothenburg, took nearly four-and-a-half hours to win the return match 5-7, 7-6, 6-7, 6-2, 6-3.

Right until the final point, the West German fans in Stuttgart's Schleyer Hall believed their local man could repeat his stunning win of last year.

Steeb, who repeatedly pulled back from behind to buoy his team's hopes, saved the first matchpoint with a backhand winner but was unable to get to a superb Wilander volley in the second.

The defeat put the pressure on world number two Boris Becker to win the day's second singles against Stefan Edberg if West Germany were to have a chance of holding on to the Cup they took from four-times winners

Sweden 12 months ago.

Wilander, who has slipped from world number one a year ago to 12th, made life difficult for himself from the start.

Leading 5-2 in the first set he lost concentration and let his opponent back into the match, winning only two of the remaining 22 points as Steeb, ranked 15th in the world, broke him twice to take the set.

Wilander has had a poor year, losing all three of his Grand Slam titles and reaching only one final — in Boston when he was beaten by Ecuador's Andres Gomez in straight sets.

His worries have been compounded by the recent news that his father has cancer, a matter he prefers not to discuss on the tennis circuit.

The noisy crowd added to his concentration problems today and in the second set he again allowed Steeb to pull level from 2-5 down.

Wilander held set points in the eighth, ninth and 10th games but was unable to convert them, although he took the ensuing tiebreak with surprising ease 7-0.

ITF-ATP war could end

STUTTGART, West Germany, Dec 15, (Reuters): A bitter row between players and the International Tennis Federation (ITF) over the finale to next year's programme may be resolved by merging two rival events, German tennis officials said yesterday.

The German Tennis Federation (DTB) has offered its services as mediator between the warring sides and president Claus Stauder said a solution might be found early next year.

Players are angry about ITF plans for a \$6 million Grand Slam Cup in West Germany next

December which would overshadow the finals, also in West Germany planned by the Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP) which takes over the running of the Tour from January.

Many, including West Germany's Boris Becker and American John McEnroe, have suggested they would boycott the Cup, saying the prize money was far too high for one event, and the DTB has refused to sanction it.

Stauder had talks yesterday with ITF president Philippe Chatrier in Stuttgart for the

Davis Cup final between West Germany and Sweden, and said afterwards the meeting had gone well.

"I get the feeling there is a certain readiness to negotiate with the ATP and maybe even, if it is possible, to make one event out of two but this isn't concrete," Stauder said.

"What we can offer and what we will try to do is to bring the ATP and the ITF together to find out whether it might work or not. If not we would have to consider our position again," he added.

Stauder said the DTB was still opposed to the Grand Slam Cup.

World class angler dies

MIAMI, Dec 15, (AP): A world class angler who held several competitive fishing titles and was featured on a BBC television show, "The Old Lady and the Sea," died Monday from complications from a fall. She was 89.

Helen Robinson set women's world records for every line class that existed during the 1960s. Among the records were the 1961 capture of a 796-pound (361-kilogramme) black marlin and a 584-pound (264-kilogramme) black marlin in 1962, both from Pinaras Bay, Panama.

In 1972, the British Broadcasting Corp. produced an hour-long television special, "The Old Lady and the Sea," on Mrs Robinson. She was 72 at the time.

The BBC filmed a fishing trip in Cairns, Australia, where Mrs Robinson hooked a marlin with her flyfishing technique, estimated at 1,000 pounds (453 kilograms). But it got away.

A Colorado native and a former investment counselor, she moved to south Florida with her husband, Webster "Doc" Robinson, because of health reasons.

"She was less competitive than he was, but she started tagging along, and she liked it," said Vic Dunaway, editor of Florida Sportsman. "Her drive came later. After he died, she decided to go ahead and make sure the world knew about his accomplishments."

Bond wins first race

SYDNEY, Dec 15, (Reuters): Alan Bond put his financial worries behind him yesterday, taking the helm of his yacht Drumbeat to guide the maxi to victory in the first race of the Southern Cross Cup race series.

Bond, whose greatest triumph was winning the America's Cup from the United States for the first time in 132 years in 1983, was delighted by his line and handicap victory in the 20 nautical mile race, sailed in fresh conditions off Sydney Heads.

"It was a great race, an excellent result," he told journalists on stepping ashore after being the yacht for half the race. "It's nice to get some balance back into life."

Drumbeat, a 25-metre Western Australian yacht launched in May, took handicap honours by 58 seconds from Heaven Can Wait, a member of the British team skippered by Harold Cudmore, despite losing its headsail shortly before the finish.

Australian team yacht Southern Cross was third on handicap, four minutes eight seconds behind Heaven Can Wait. Drumbeat's size was a distinct advantage in the southwest winds which gusted to 25 knots.

Cyclone from New South Wales was fourth with Hong Kong's Foo 2 fifth.

The New South Wales team lead with 88 points followed by Australia with 86 and Britain with 82.



Bond, at the helm of his yacht, receives directions from skipper Peter Gilmour (right). (Reuters wirephoto)

Jordan takes Bulls past Magic

CHICAGO, Dec 15, (AP): Michael Jordan scored 26 of his 38 points in the first-half as the Chicago Bulls rolled to an early lead and cruised to a 124-113 victory over the Orlando Magic last night.

Jordan scored his 38 points in only 25 minutes, the fewest he has played this season, as the Bulls won their third in a row.

After Orlando's Terry Catledge scored the game's first basket to give the Magic their only lead at 2-0, Chicago scored the next 11 points and led 35-23 after one period. The Bulls led by 14 at halftime and the Magic got no closer in the second half.

Bullets 105, Hornets 101.

Mark Alarie sank an 18-foot jumper with 15 seconds left to snap a 101-101 tie as Washington

handed Charlotte a club-record tying ninth consecutive setback.

The losing streak matches the longest in the NBA this season.

After Rex Chapman got the Hornets even 101-101 with a steal and a layup with 28 seconds to play, Alarie hit a jumper from the top of the key and Washington beat Charlotte for the seventh time in eight lifetime meetings. Washington's Jeff Malone added two free throws in the final second.

Ledell Eckles led Washington with 21 points. Chapman led the Hornets with 23.

Pacers 102, Nets 78.

Rik Smits scored 13 of his 30 points as Indiana rode a 25-9 first-quarter lead to its 10th victory in 12 games.

Smits, who also had 15

rebounds, scored nine points as the pacers started the game with a 17-3 run. The Nets missed 17 of their first 18 shots and committed eight turnovers in the first quarter.

Spurs 104, Rockets 100.

Willie Anderson had 10 of his 19 points in the fourth period as San Antonio outscored Houston 19-9 in the final 7:24 to beat the Rockets.

The Spurs trailed 91-85 with 7:40 left but scored six straight points to tie the game. After Akeme Olajuwon scored with 5:18 left, Anderson had seven points in an 11-2 run that put the Spurs ahead to stay.

Standings

Indiana 102 New Jersey 78

Washington 105 Charlotte 101

Chicago 124 Orlando 113

San Antonio 104 Houston 100

Koreas overcome another barrier

SEOUL, South Korea, Dec 15, (AP): South and North Korea overcame a significant barrier today in efforts to form a single team for next year's Asian Games by agreeing to select athletes in open competition.

There were no immediate comments from South Korean officials, but the two sides were scheduled to resume full-fledged sports talks Dec 22.

The two Koreas have been bitter rivals since their land was divided in 1945. They fought the three-year Korean war that left more than one million people killed or wounded on both sides.

Today's meeting at the truce village of Panmunjom inside the demilitarized zone was aimed at narrowing differences between sports officials over

some key pending details, including the selection and composition of the joint team.

The two sides agreed in past talks on a flag and team name for the games, which will be held in Beijing in September, 1990.

Today's meeting, the third since Dec 1, was closed to foreign reporters. Ten Korean reporters who were allowed to cover the talks, which lasted three hours and 45 minutes, later issued a pool report.

Sports talks are among several channels of dialogue in progress between the two Koreas. Other contacts aimed at easing tension and helping reunite separated family members in the two sides have made little progress.

Marsh hits unbeaten 170

SYDNEY, Dec 15, (Reuters): Geoff Marsh gave a swift reminder to the Australian selectors by hitting a superb unbeaten 170 for Western Australia on the opening day of their Sheffield Shield game against South Australia in Perth today.

In spite of a broken toe suffered before Australia's Test against New Zealand two weeks ago, Marsh hammered 29 boundaries as he and fellow opener Mike Veletta took Western Australia to a formidable 283 without loss by the close.

Veletta was undefeated on 98 as the pair attempted to emulate the 374 they took off Indian state Tamil Nadu on the same ground last season.

South Australian wicket-keeper Darren Berry, having passed Northamptonshire wicketkeeper Keith Andrew's world record of 2,132 runs without conceding a bye in his previous match against Victoria, saw his sequence ended at 2,447.

New South Wales threw away the chance of a big score on a good batting pitch against Victoria at Albury, finishing on 226 for six at the close.

Top-order batsmen Steve Small, Trevor Bayliss and Mark O'Neill scored 47 apiece but NSW could only manage 52 runs in the final two-hour session. Victorian captain Simon O'Donnell captured three wickets for 33.

Walsh to stay with Gloucestershire



Courtney Walsh

LONDON, Dec 15, (Reuters): West Indian Test pace bowler Courtney Walsh has agreed terms to stay with county championship side Gloucestershire until the end of the 1993 English cricket season.

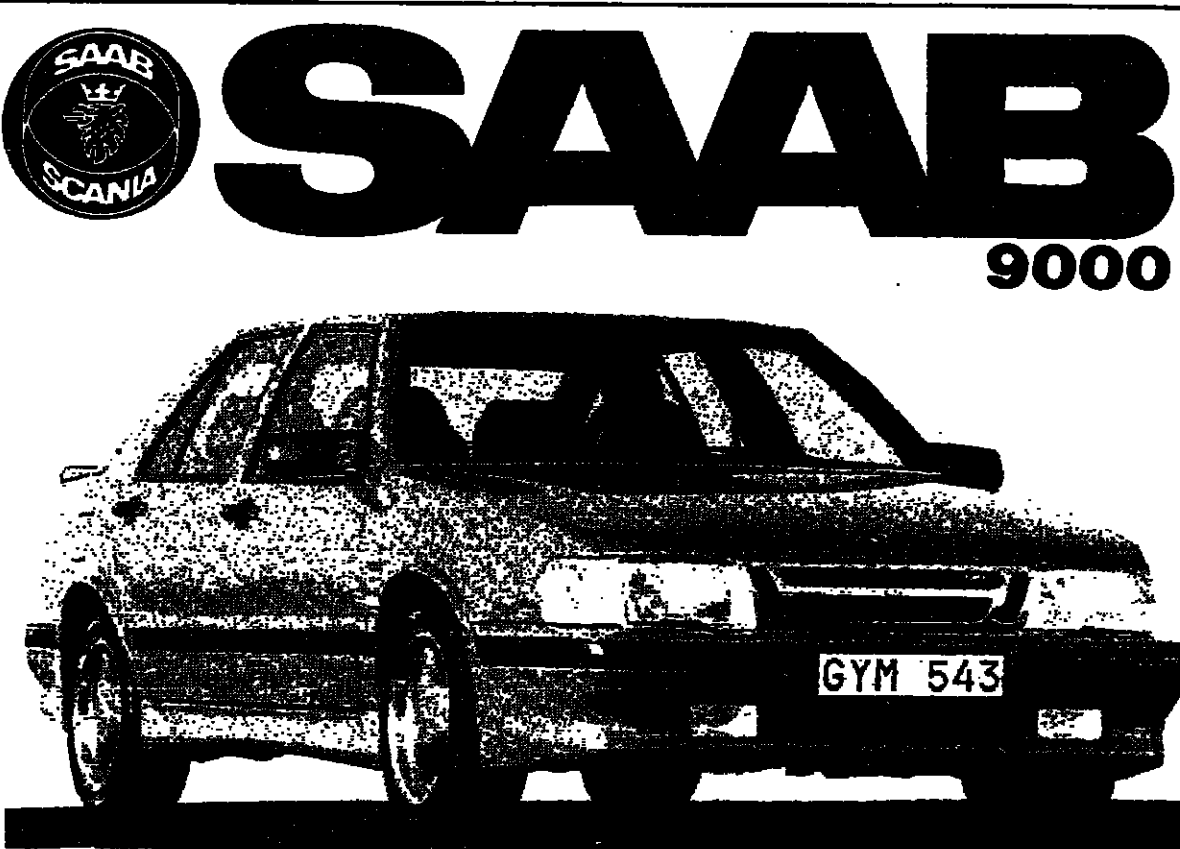
Surrey had been given permission to speak to him when his present contract runs out in February.

But Gloucestershire secretary Pip August said yesterday: "Courtney has told us he is coming back on the terms we offered. The contract is in the post and we expect everything to be signed by Christmas."

Sir Gary Sobers, Rohan Kanhai, Clive Lloyd and Andy Roberts are among former West Indian and Pakistani cricketers who have been invited to appear in two benefit matches for ex-West Indies Test batsman Charlie Davis.

Davis, who will be 46 next month, is suffering from multiple sclerosis. He played 15 Tests for the West Indies between 1968 and 1972, scoring 1,301 runs at an average of 54.20 and was the first Trinidadian to score a century at Lord's.

The matches will be played in the West Indies on January 31 and February 4.



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